

**A**ccessibility and barrier free infrastructures and environments are important indicators for sustainable development. In particular in cities, people who experience disabilities, often face challenges and discrimination regarding the equal participation in using the urban public spaces or infrastructures. This counts especially for public transportation systems. It is often difficult for people with disabilities to enter subways, railway stations or similar facilities, as these are often not equipped with corresponding facilities, such as elevators, ramps or blind and deaf-friendly signage.

To ensure a barrier free development of transportation infrastructure, related facilities and travels, China published a guideline on improving transportation services for the elderly and the disabled. The guideline was jointly released by the MOT, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the China Disabled Persons' Federation and four other departments on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018. By this China sets up a guiding framework for the establishment of a service system for barrier-free transport by 2020.

The guideline is translated by the [Sino-German Cooperation on Low Carbon Transport](#) (CLCT) project, which is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

**Suggestions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Travel Services for Elderly People & Disabled, issued by Ministry of Transport, MoHURD, National Railway Administration, Civil Aviation Administration, State Post Bureau, China Disabled People's Federation as well as National Working Committee Office for Aging People Service**

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Provinces and autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps traffic and transportation department (bureau,

committee), housing urban and rural construction department (bureau, commission), postal administration, disabled federation, office of working committee of aging, regional railway regulatory authority, civil aviation authority of all regions:

The elderly and disabled people are important members of the socialist family. Currently, there are about 230 million elderly people over the age of 60 in our country and more than 85 million disabled people. To provide travel facilities, further strengthen and improve the travel service for the elderly and disabled people is a crucial task to promote the social norms of respect and help the elderly disabled people. To respond actively to the urgent needs of population aging, to realize the equalization of public services and building a moderately prosperous society, is also an important measure to develop the transport system to benefit the population and meet the population's requirement on a better life.

In order to thoroughly implement the decisions and arrangements made by the Party Central Committee and the State Council and implementation of *State Council's Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Establishing and Implementing Elderly Care Services* (Guo Ban Fa [2017] No. 52) and other relevant documents, the following suggestions are proposed to promote the construction of barrier-free transport conditions, to strengthen and improve the travel service to the elderly and disabled as well as to ensure their travel rights:

## **I. The general requirements**

### **(1) Guiding ideology**

To carry out the spirit of the 19th National Congress, to be guided by Xi Jinping's socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era, to meet the overall requirements of the construction of a transport nation, to strengthen and improve the barrier-free travel conditions for the elderly and disabled people, to promote the innovative ideas and measures, to improve construction and reconstruction of the barrier-free infrastructure and to encourage to promote the new technologies and equipment as well as service conditions for the barrier-free travel.

### **(2) Basic principles**

#### ***People- and service-orientation***

To practice the developing ideology focusing on people, to secure and improve the travel rights for the elderly and disabled people, to improve the travel service quality and to create innovative service modes, to plan the service resource coordinational and to

propose the voluntary service, to provide superior travel service to elderly and disabled people

Focus on practicing the people-centered development concept, and earnestly protect and improve the rights and interests of the elderly and disabled people in traveling. To enhance the service quality of barrier-free travel services, create the innovative service model, pool service resources, advocate volunteer service, provide services to the elderly, disabled people provide quality travel services.

### ***Demand- and local conditions-orientation***

The establishment of barrier-free travel system will be promoted steadily by understanding the travel needs and characteristics of the elderly and disabled with assistance of scientific methods, based on the features of different transport modes and combined with local economic conditions.

### ***Government's leadership and social participation***

It is necessary to give prominence to the responsibility of the government and mobilize all sectors of society, such as industry associations and organizations of handicapped people, to give full play to the role of market mechanism to meet the needs of the multi-level and diversified travel of the elderly and handicapped people.

### **(3) Overall requirements**

By 2020, the transportation accessibility service system has basically taken shape. The level of barrier-free access, aged-friendly services and the equalization of service provision will have significantly improved. The barrier-free transportation infrastructure and facilities will continuously meet the needs of travel and barrier-free transport services. The hardware (facilities) and software (services) must be optimized regularly to satisfy and increase the contentment of the elderly and disabled during travel.

The specific targets are to install or refurbish barrier-free access in the railway passenger stations, service areas of highways, bus stations in second and higher class, urban ferry, international ferry terminals (including waterway terminals), and terminal areas of civil airports as well as urban rail stations. Postal service to send all parcels for elderly and disabled to the door. The purchase of new low-floor buses will be encouraged for well-developed cities and obligatory for cities above 5,000,000 people. Well-developed railway passenger stations, service areas of national and provincial highways, bus terminals in second and higher class, postal stations, urban rail stations as well as urban transport hubs should enhance supplementary guidance services for the elderly and disabled to achieve full coverage across all transport facilities.

By 2035, a well-developed barrier-free transport system will be basically completed. The comprehensive, seamless and safe environment for unobstructed travel services will continue to improve. The level of accessibility service will be significantly enhanced to meet the basic needs and requirements of elderly and the disabled.

## **II To speed up the construction and refurbishment of barrier-free transport infrastructure**

(4) To optimize the distribution of the infrastructure and facilities

The transport departments at all levels should consider the aging population and the congregation of elderly and disabled people in the integrated planning of transport logistics system. In the comprehensive and particular transport plans, key tasks and supporting policies to construct and reconstruct the barrier-free transport infrastructure should be identified for the sectors of railway, highway, waterway (including ports), civil aviation, postal services and urban passenger transport. The transport departments should actively cooperate with other relevant departments in order to integrate barrier-free transport infrastructure into the barrier-free environment plan and to optimize the distribution of the barrier-free transport infrastructure.

(5) To strengthen the construction and reconstruction of barrier-free infrastructure and facilities

The related requirements in the *"Regulations on the Construction of Accessible Environment"* should be implemented and the standards of *"Accessible Design Code"*, *"Accessible Design Specification for Railway Passenger Stations"* and *"Accessibility Equipment Configuration of Passenger Terminal Areas of Civil Airports"* should be met at the construction, reconstruction and extension of the railway passenger terminals, highway service areas, bus terminals at second- and higher class, passenger wharves, civilian transport airports, urban rail transit stations as well as urban public transport hubs. The barrier-free facilities and information signs of barrier-free facilities, which are equipped in passenger ports for the land transport ferry terminals, ferry terminals and passenger ships, should be improved. The barrier-free facilities in passenger stations at second and higher class as well as in the postal stations should be refurbished gradually according to circumstances. Public transport from the train, ships, civil air planes, buses to urban subway, cars should be equipped with barrier-free access.

## **III. To improve service quality**

(6) To create innovative service model

Increase provision of thoughtful service and acceleration of the service models innovation to improve the overall service systematically at a micro level.

In the well-developed regions, railway stations, bus stations, passenger ports and civil airports with high human traffic should provide barrier-free priority access to purchase tickets with friendly and polite service for the elderly and disabled passengers featuring exclusive waiting areas and green passageways with signs displayed prominently. Encourage carers to accompany whole trips, prior reservation of services and send offs by family members through the provision of buggy rides, wheelchairs and supplementary facilities for the safety and convenience of passengers with reduced mobility. Transfers between different transport modes for a full point-to-point transport package should be brought into consideration. Courier delivery and “rehabilitation buses” can be provided in areas with demand for elderly and disabled passengers.

#### (7) To build up travel service information systems

The barrier-free information products and its corresponding technology should be researched and promoted on a wide basis. Voice and other electronic reminder announcement should be equipped at railway stations, bus stations, passenger ports, civil airports, urban railway stations, urban public transport hubs as well as in the public transport vehicles. Braille signs, communication system for disabled passenger including voice gravitation and blind guidance systems should be constructed according to the relevant standards and requirements. The reservation service should be promoted to apply by innovative measures like WeChat, Weibo, mobile Apps and hotlines.

#### (8) To improve service standard

Detailed rules should be set up by the operating enterprises to optimize the service for the elderly and disabled passengers. Skill trainings to service the elderly and disabled passengers will be carried out to improve the service standards. The local associations of disabled people and local committees of elderly people could cooperate with the transport departments to form a volunteer team organizing service trainings, publicity events and to accompany elderly and disabled passengers on pre-booked door-to-door travel. Thoughtful, priority service and societal support will be encouraged to provide a diversified professional barrier-free access for the safety and convenience of passengers with reduced mobility.

#### (9) To ensure safe travel

The local transport departments at all levels should reinforce the linkage between departments and work closely with each other to urge the operating enterprises to strictly implement the responsibility for safe transport and enhance the standard of travel service. The elderly and the disabled should be guided to make rational travel plans to avoid transport rush hours and the associated dangers caused by passenger crowds.

The safety of barrier-free facilities should be enhanced by operational maintenance; improving information management, digitalization, providing appropriate guidance on the

use of barrier-free facilities as well as establishing safety monitoring systems to provide fail-safe and reliable barrier-free services.

#### **IV. To optimize the travel policy system**

##### **(10) To realize the supportive policies**

During the renovation of old cities and planning and construction of new cities, the government at all levels should integrate the actual needs of postal and courier service, urban public transport as well as taxis to support the construction of barrier-free infrastructure and to equip the barrier-free facilities. Furthermore, the governments should support to plan the parking places and set up noticeable signs for disabled at railway stations, service areas at highways and normal provincial highway and civil transport airports, etc..

For the bus stations, passenger ports and public transit hubs, which cannot be renovated to build barrier-free facilities due to prior land use allocation, the setup and approval of such projects shall be prioritised. The financial departments should provide subsidies to support the operating enterprises to update the barrier-free facilities at railway trains and passenger ships, as well as the urban low-floor buses and barrier-free taxis. The aviation service rules for the disabled passengers should be further implemented and the service at railway and aviation sectors should be improved.

##### **(11) To establish a supporting system**

Discount and convenience should be provided to the elderly by urban public transport. Public transport such as railways, highways and civil aviation should be encouraged to provide convenient services for the elderly.

Local disabled persons` federations and working committees for aging people should lobby municipal government for financial support like ticket subsidy for the elderly and disabled. Transport departments at all level should also work with disabled person's federations to establish a supportive policy of using public transport with guide dogs and the urban public transport stations should improve the facilities for the disabled people with guide dogs.

The local governments should urge transport operating enterprises to set priority seats for pregnant women, children and disabled as well as provide special parking areas for wheelchairs. Elderly and disabled person should have guidance and priority at buying and controlling tickets.

##### **(12) To improve standard system**

The establishment of standard system of barrier-free service should be promoted for the sectors of railways, highways, waterways, civil aviation, postal service and urban

passenger transport. It should be promoted to implement the standards such as "Design Standard on barrier-free Passenger Railway Stations ", "Barrier-free Equipment and Facilities for Passenger Terminal Areas at Civil Airports", "Technical Requirements for Low-Floor & Low-Entrance Buses" and "General Technical Conditions for Passenger Trains and High-Speed Trains". The design regulations on road public service facilities as well as the requirement on classification and construction of passenger transport stations should be established and revised.

Design and production of vehicles and trains should be standardized focusing on the careful consideration of real needs of elderly and disabled person for safe and convenient transport. Local governments should combine the local conditions to establish standards and regulations on construction, management and maintenance of barrier-free facilities. Furthermore, the publicity and implementation of standards at local levels should also be encouraged.

## **V. Measures to ensure the implementation**

(13) To strengthen the organizational function and leading role of government

All local governments and all relevant departments should fully understand the importance of travel services for the elderly and disabled people, coordinating the travel service, clearly identifying the tasks and responsibility. The travel service of elderly and disabled should be included into the working plans of governments and departments, and evaluated according to target management and performance assessment.

The working system and mechanism should be established for improving the barrier-free transport environment. Under the system and mechanism, the governments will play a leading role; the society and public will take part in management on different levels. The cooperation and coordination will be promoted between departments in the sectors of transport, urban planning and construction as well as equipment.

(14) To increase the capital investment

The governments should procure more innovative and optimized services to improve the travel conditions for elderly and disabled people. The use of governmental and private capital should be encouraged to invest in construction and reconstruction of barrier-free transport infrastructure.

(15) To strengthen supervision and inspection of transport barrier-free service

All local governments and relevant departments should strengthen guiding function to improve barrier-free travel conditions and identify the tasks and responsibilities. By setting up the system of inspection and supporting society and public to supervise, the service of barrier-free travel could be improved effectively.

(16) To strengthen publicity and guidance

To capitalize on the guiding force of public discourse, barrier-free access in transport should be promoted through channels such as television, newspaper, internet and social media; through campaigns in schools, communities, enterprises and other public areas. Activities like "urban public transport" and "week of bus transport" will be continued to foster a culture of awareness on barrier-free travel, increase support to maintain facilities and to respect the proper use of "blind lanes" with tactile paving as well as to create a friendly, safe, convenient and comfortable travel conditions for elderly and disabled people.

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