

Mr. Jokinen travelled to New York to celebrate the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

Mr. Markku Jokinen, President of the WFD, participated as WFD's representative in the festivities organized to commemorate the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The event was held in the beautiful UN General Assembly Hall. Also the UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon honoured the event with his presence and held a speech.

Right before the festivities Mr. Ban Ki-moon met representatives of the IDA CRPD Forum. IDA is an international alliance formed by eight international organisations of persons with disabilities. Also WFD was represented in this meeting, this time by a former WFD Board Member, Ms Martha Lucia Osorno Posada from Columbia. According to Ms. Osorno Posada the short gathering went well. The group handed over a paper to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon where was among other things mentioned the need to make the UN system accessible to Deaf people. It was important to be able to share the concerns of the Deaf community on sign languages and the linguistic rights of deaf people also with Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Moreover the event itself was very visible for sign languages. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Office (UN DESA) organised two ASL interpreters that were shown in the big screens above the speakers. Two Finnish SL interpreters and one Columbian SL interpreter were also sitting in the first rows. Thus, there were three sign languages visible all along the event. There will be UN Webcast about the event in [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) where you will be able to see the whole programme.

Furthermore some speakers talked about sign languages and even about the next WFD World Congress in Durban! In the end of her speech Ms. Sue Van der Merwe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, mentioned shortly about the Congress. She has been invited to be a member of the organising committee of the Congress.

Panama government had a deaf female member as part of the delegation. Mr. Jokinen told thanked the delegation representative for sending a deaf delegate and told them that they set a very good example to other governments and to the UN in general.

A representative of New Zealand told about recognition of NZSL in their legislation and the Hungarian representative informed about their government's translation of the Convention into Hungarian SL, Braille and other means of communication.

At the end Ms. Martha Lucia Osorno Posada (WFD) and Mr. Robert Martin (Inclusion International) held a speech on behalf of IDA and the disability movement. It was great that one of the speeches was held by a deaf person and in sign language.

New UN stamps were also shown to the audience by the UN Postal Administration. This collection includes 6 different stamps and one of them is devoted to sign languages, with a person in red background showing the sign of "amour", love.

While being in New York, Mr. Jokinen is participating in the IDA CRPD Forum and Steering Committee meetings. The IDA CRPD Forum will continue the work done by the

International Disability Caucus (IDC), created during the AdHoc meetings of the Convention. The idea is to change the IDC to a CRPD Forum that would continue the work of the international disability movement for ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention.