



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

## WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the Council of Europe. WFD was established in Rome in 1951.

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### WFD Statement at the General Debate, Tenth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

14 June 2017 Delivered by Ms Eeva Tupi

*International Sign version is available at <https://vimeo.com/221623159>*

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates and observers, my name is Eeva Tupi and my role is Human Rights Officer within the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Our organisation represents national deaf associations from 134 countries and is a member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA).

We welcome this year's theme with the focus on inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the implementation of the Convention. The WFD has been providing training to deaf associations in low and middle-income countries for the past four years in regard to the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD. This support has been vital in enabling deaf people to become more aware of their rights and has significantly enhanced their capacity to advocate for positive change together with other DPOs. The result is enhanced potential in terms of following up on Member States' recommendations as a consequence of the training received and concluding observations including recommendations which deal with the realisation of their rights.

The WFD calls for continuous financial commitment from Member States and multilateral agencies to support the aforementioned activities as the optimum way of increasing the participation of persons with disabilities, including deaf people, in the development, implementation and monitoring of legislation and policies affecting their lives.

The WFD congratulates the CRPD Committee on its efforts to more systematically urge States Parties to allocate resources for interpreter training, secure sufficient numbers of interpreters and ensure the availability of interpreters in courts. Interpreter services should also be free of charge to deaf people. States need to take their obligation with regard to the provision of sign language interpreters seriously, as still too often, deaf people are excluded from decision-making due to a shortage of or lack of funding for professional sign language interpreters. Moreover, the WFD reminds Governments and other entities to adhere to [Article 9 of the CRPD](#) on the provision of professional sign language interpretation including training, accreditation and funding in close collaboration and consultation with national associations of the deaf, led by deaf people themselves. No decisions affecting deaf people's lives should be made without their full involvement.

Finally, with the start of the second decade of the CRPD, the WFD wishes to remind State Parties and the UN system, including its special agencies, of the need to respect the paradigm shift from a medical model to a human rights based approach, so successfully reflected in the CRPD. This is especially important when talking about the prevention of deafness and hearing loss. The WFD stresses the right of deaf children to learn sign language, to be educated in sign language and to interact with other children and adults using sign language.

Thank you.

#### **About the World Federation of the Deaf**

*The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international non-governmental organisation representing and promoting approximately 70 million deaf people's human rights worldwide. The WFD is a federation of deaf organisations from 134 nations; its mission is to promote the human rights of deaf people and full, quality and equal access to all spheres of life, including self-determination, sign language, education, employment and community life. WFD has a consultative status in the United Nations and is a founding member of International Disability Alliance (IDA). ([www.wfdeaf.org](http://www.wfdeaf.org)) Email: [info@wfd.fi](mailto:info@wfd.fi)*