



**WORLD FEDERATION  
OF THE DEAF**

## **XIX WORLD CONGRESS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF RESOLUTIONS**

11-15 July 2023, Jeju, South Korea  
Approved by the 132th WFD Board meeting

*The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), its 137 Members and 1768 participants from 101 countries at the XIX World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Jeju, South Korea, 11-15 July 2023*

With reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol,

With reference to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

With reference to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,

With reference to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action,

Reaffirming the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

Recalling the UNESCO 2023 Registered Memory of the World on the Resolution of the 2nd International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (ICED) in Milan, Italy, in 1880, and the Resolution of the 21st International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (ICED) in Vancouver, Canada, in 2010,



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Reaffirming the World Federation of the Deaf Declaration on the Rights of Deaf Children, approved by the XXI General Assembly of the World Federation of the Deaf

Whereas His Excellency António Guterres, the 9th and current Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared in the Opening Ceremony of the World Congress that the diversity of languages, including sign languages, must be respected and promoted, and that communication barriers must be dismantled to achieve access to information and equality for all deaf people,

Whereas His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, stated in the Opening Ceremony of the World Congress that deaf people face higher human rights violations in periods of conflict, pandemics and climate change, and that interconnectedness, resilience, sustainability, inclusion, and empowerment are the keys to overcome future challenges in the society where no one is left behind,

Whereas the World Federation of the Deaf strives for a world where deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere,

Whereas the XIX World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf addresses the importance of securing Human Rights in times of crises,

Whereas Articles 5, 9, 11, 21, 24, 25 and 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises that deaf persons have the right to equal protection against discrimination on all grounds; to be provided full access to information and communication in sign language; to be protected and put in safety in situations of risk; to realise their national sign languages legally recognised; to access an inclusive, quality and free education in sign language; to be provided quality early intervention services; and to benefit from the capacity-building and international cooperation initiatives.

Reaffirms the promotion and fulfilment of the fundamental rights for deaf people everywhere and at any time, and especially in times of crises,



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**1. Recalls the free access to and the use of sign languages as a fundamental right for all deaf people, and specifically,**

- the importance of supporting language planning efforts for sign languages worldwide, particularly in scenarios where artificial signing systems have been imposed, and underscores the significance of free access and use of sign languages as a fundamental right for all deaf people,
- the recognition and the promotion of the critical role of the deaf-led associative movement in fostering language practices, particularly amidst the challenges posed by migration, increased vulnerability of deaf women, and other underrepresented deaf individuals in times of conflicts and climate change,
- the legal recognition of national sign languages by governments and promoting their use in public information and communication with deaf citizens at all times,
- the promotion of sign language learning initiatives in every country in the world, emphasising the necessity for such actions in the current global crisis, and calls for the implementation of legislation recognizing sign languages in policies and government actions at all levels,
- the importance of building the capacity of deaf scholars in applied deaf studies and interpreter education, and the consequent impact on the national sign languages, specifically in the rapidly growing online platforms and social media channels in post-Covid times,
- the condemnation of teaching and researching practices on the national sign languages by hearing people, and the importance of deaf-led teaching and research work in the national sign languages,
- the need to publish the deaf perspective on diverse issues, ensuring deaf communities can rebut unhelpful research findings by hearing researchers, and values the significant contribution of Deaf Studies research in empowering deaf communities worldwide,
- the condemnation of past and present eugenics activities, particularly those aiming to eradicate sign languages, and insists on the search for truth and reconciliation for resilient and empowered futures of deaf communities, while supporting deaf associations in their push back against such activities,



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- the preservation and revitalization of national and indigenous sign languages, especially those under threat of endangerment, and the condemnation of actions towards the standardisation of sign languages,

**2. Strongly endorses the achievement of the rights of deaf learners of all ages to a mandatory quality multilingual inclusive and complete education.**

and, specifically:

- the prevention of language deprivation among deaf children at early age and the reduction of the risks of adverse child communication experiences,
- the access to sign language as a health need,
- the promotion of quality sign language educational interventions for deaf children and youth experiencing language deprivation,
- the promotion of early exposure to natural and spontaneous sign language acquisition among deaf children, and the access to sign language courses for their parents,
- the establishment of deaf-led innovative models of deaf-centred and bilingual education in all countries, especially in the Global South facing lack of resources and means and deeper impact of world crisis,
- the provision of a curriculum in their national sign languages and the national languages of the country to contribute to higher education outcomes,
- the importance of identity, role models, and peer support in language-rich learning environments,
- the resilience and innovation in educational instruction in educational gaps caused by the crises,



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**3. Strongly emphasises the rights of deaf people to accessibility and inclusion in sign language in the society, with regard to :**

- the benefits of accessibility, universal design and new technologies to achieve bilingual literacy of deaf children, enhanced learning progress of deaf students as well as the improved teaching practices by deaf teachers,
- the importance of the consultation and leadership at the decision-making level of the deaf organisations in the design and development of new technologies, especially in the field of Artificial Intelligence, by universities and companies,
- the observation of the advance of new technology, products and services that promotes deaf people's autonomy, including avatars, machine translation systems and Video Relay Services, responding to the expectations and needs of the deaf community and its diversity, and ensuring its affordability and implementation in countries in the Global South,

**4. Strongly encourages the inclusiveness in international cooperation, including international development programmes in the Global South, and:**

- the partnerships with deaf people, deaf-led organisations, international development entities, and in-country agencies, local and national governments,
- the promotion of sustainable development interventions undertaken by deaf-led organisations in deaf communities more at risk of marginalisation in post-Covid times,
- the design of contextually appropriate interventions that are inclusive and designed by and for deaf people and their organisations in the Global South,
- the conduction of deaf-led evidence-based research in the deaf communities in the Global South to inform advocacy and influence actions,
- the capacity-building of national deaf-led organisations and deaf youth organisations to take ownership and control of their interventions and to ensure self-empowerment and sustainability of their organisations,
- the mutual respect, collaboration and open, clear, and empowering communication between deaf organisations in Global North and deaf organisations from Global South in international development projects,



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- the inclusion of Sign language rights as a thematic area in the funding priorities under disability inclusion / international cooperation guidelines by development partners in global north,
- the call for deaf-led organisations in Global north to work with their governments to influence the incorporation of deaf thematic areas in their funding priorities.
- the accountability of international organisations or academia, or international cooperation agencies when visiting Global South countries to gather data, studies or develop capacity building activities, by respecting the cultural identity, needs and expressions of local deaf communities and aiming for their continuation, prosperity, and growth.
- the emphasis on inclusion of gender and youth interventions in the development programmes being funded through international cooperation and partnership;

**5. Emphasises the importance to secure Human Rights in times of crises, such as conflicts, health crisis and climate change, by promoting:**

- the collection of deaf-led data in current crises and the analysis of potential future crisis in each country and their impact on the lives of deaf people,
- the development of preventive measures and policies to address the needs of deaf people when they are facing a natural disaster, a pandemics or a humanitarian conflict,
- the transnational exchange of good practices in governments' crisis communication and public emergency information in national sign languages,
- the provision of telecommunication services, including emergency services, that are accessible in sign language to deaf people and can be reached at any time,
- the access to inclusive public warning systems and emergency services for deaf people in their national sign language at any time and anywhere,
- the training and provision of services of deaf interpreters in crisis communication and media to ensure the accessibility and quality of the information provided in sign language to deaf people,
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- the promotion of international solidarity initiatives towards deaf people and their communities in countries facing a humanitarian crisis,
- the awareness raising among crisis and emergency services on the specific communication and information needs of deaf people,
- the empowerment of deaf organisations on their significant role and participation in the development and shaping of policies addressing emergency and crisis communication,

#### **6. Calls for the promotion of the rights of deaf people with diverse identities that are part of the deaf communities through:**

- the respect, protection, and support for deaf individuals with diverse identities, including gender identity, sexual orientation, racial, ethnic, indigenous, religious, amongst other diverse identities,
- the recognition of the multiple oppressions faced by deaf individuals, such as racism, gender discrimination, and ableism, through intersectional approaches,
- the integration of intersectionality into policies, strategies, and decision-making processes to ensure inclusivity and equal treatment for all deaf individuals,
- the implementation of deaf people's human rights from an intersectional and multidimensional perspective,
- the establishment of safeguarding policies and actions to prevent violence against deaf women and girls, especially during crises,
- the empowerment of deaf individuals with diverse identities by providing access to resources and support networks in various domains,
- the promotion of respect for deaf spaces as inclusive and welcoming environments that value and celebrate the intersectional identities of deaf individuals,
- the embedment of the intersectionality in deaf education to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach that recognises and addresses the diverse identities and experiences of deaf students,
- the development of accessible and inclusive health services, including sexual and reproductive health, for deaf individuals,



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- the comprehensive sexual education that embraces diverse identities within the deaf community
- the inclusion of deafblind people in all spaces, ensuring considerations for their accessible needs and provision of necessary resources.
- the promotion of an increase in sign language interpreters with diverse backgrounds to better represent and reflect the identities within the deaf communities.