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## Press Release

### A World where deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere!

### United Nations denies sign language access at the 32nd session of the CRPD Committee

The United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD Committee) and the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) urgently call for attention and action regarding the provision of necessary staff and facilities to ensure sign language interpretation at all events and meetings.

According to the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and Articles 9 and 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), United Nations entities must ensure the accessibility of their events and meetings for deaf participants to enable equal participation.

Deaf people have the right to access information about their human rights and to communicate in their national sign languages while interacting with United Nations representatives. Ensuring their full and effective participation will enhance human rights advancements and ensure deaf people participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

#### Summary of recent violations:

1. CRPD's 32nd Session: UNOG failed to provide CRPD Member Mr Tamon with sign language interpretation in his chosen language during official sessions and informal interactions. Mr. Tamon had to arrange and cover interpreters himself, with support from external organisations, which is an unacceptable economic barrier to his mandate. It is UNOG who is responsible for this provision.
2. Dominican Republic Country Review: On March 4, the government of the Dominican Republic provided national sign language interpreters via Zoom for their country review. However, on March 5, UNOG informed them they would be financially responsible for using the Zoom platform, forcing them to withdraw the interpreters. The second part of the dialogue proceeded without national sign language interpretation, undermining accessibility principles.
3. UN TV Screen: The UN has stopped including national sign language interpreters on the UN TV screen, as noted by CRPD Members.



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The WFD strongly condemns these accessibility violations and setbacks. The situation of CRPD Member Mr Tamon and the barriers faced by the government of the Dominican Republic are clear examples of systemic failures in upholding the rights of deaf individuals at the UN. There is no excuse for hindering the exercise of human rights and leaving deaf people behind. The United Nations must model compliance with the UNCRPD.

**Call to Action:**

1. Ensure Mr. Hiroshi Tamon has full access to all CRPD Committee meetings and informal discussions by providing him with a national sign language interpreter of his choice.
2. Guarantee that all UN proceedings provide sign language interpretation in both national sign languages and International Sign when requested by parties before the Committee.
3. Eliminate barriers preventing UN Member States from ensuring sign language accessibility during their country reviews.
4. Engage in direct discussions with WFD, IDA, and WASLI to develop a sustainable and CRPD-compliant accessibility framework for deaf participants in any UN processes.

The WFD will continue advocating until full access is ensured. Deaf individuals must not be left behind in the international human rights system.

**Press contact:**

Ms Audrey Sangla WFD Media and Communications Officer [audrey.sangla@wfdeaf.org](mailto:audrey.sangla@wfdeaf.org)