



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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Members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Submission related to Draft guidelines on the participation of Disabled Persons Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, National Human Rights Institutions and other stakeholders in the work of the Committee

Dear Committee members,

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) thanks for the opportunity to contribute in the development of the guidelines on the participation of disabled persons' organisations, civil society organisations, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders in the work of the CRPD Committee. The WFD has 133 national associations of the deaf as ordinary members. Thus the WFD would like to highlight the importance of identifying organisations of persons with disabilities appropriately and to clarify sign language interpretation issue in the draft guidelines.

In order to become an ordinary member of the WFD, national associations of the deaf need to prove that a majority of their board members are deaf, thus organisations should be led by deaf people. During country reviews and general discussions of the CRPD committee, the WFD has seen examples of a parent of a deaf child and a sign language interpreter speaking on behalf of deaf people. The WFD does not think that it is appropriate for hearing people who work closely with deaf people to take over because deaf people should be given the opportunity to raise their concerns and views themselves. Due to experiencing communication barriers that deaf people face in daily life, a particular attention is necessary to ensure that they can communicate with the Committee and to avoid hearing people taking over them. The WFD works closely with the International Disability Alliance and has been supporting national associations of the deaf to become involved in parallel reporting with other national organisations of persons with disabilities. Thus it is possible for you to check from [the ordinary member list at the WFD website](#) to identify a deaf organisation whether it is a national association of the deaf representing the deaf community in its country or not. Especially deaf associations in developing countries have faced troubles due to not having financial and political capacity to attend various meetings including sessions of the CRPD Committee when there is a risk of a foundation or a charity led by hearing people with funds and network with local politicians trying to take over. Such a foundation or a charity might be focusing on a small part of population only while national associations of the deaf advocate for rights of the deaf community in whole country regardless their economic and social status.

Paragraph 2.11 on accessibility in the draft guidelines mention sign language interpretation but the whole paragraph is not clear. Is this paragraph addressing translation of documents or interpretation in dialogues between organisations of persons with disabilities and the CRPD Committee? The WFD commends steps taken by the Committee to provide International Sign interpretation, and in few cases, national sign language interpretation for interactive dialogues with government delegations.

WFD's member organisations have attended sessions as part of national delegation of organisations of persons with disabilities who have participated in side-events. Particularly organisations in developing countries have

faced difficulties in finding funding to cover sign language interpretation expenses. Outside interpreted public sessions of the CRPD Committee, the environment is not accessible for these deaf people who cannot afford bringing sign language interpreters with them. In this situation, it is challenging for deaf representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities to communicate with Committee members while hearing people have the opportunity to network besides public sessions. Providing International Sign interpretation for the use of deaf delegates of organisations of persons with disabilities outside public sessions would make attending sessions more accessible for deaf people.

Hopefully WFD's contribution is useful in drafting the guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

Kind regards,

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