



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 delivered by Eeva Tupi, Human Rights Officer at the opening of the 14th session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 17 August 2015**

Thank you, Members of the Committee. My name is Eeva Tupi and I work as a Human Rights Officer at the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Our organisation has member organisations in 132 countries and is a member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA).

A couple of weeks ago, the XVII World Congress of the WFD took place in Istanbul, Turkey, with theme of “Strengthening Human Diversity”. The event attracted 1312 participants from 97 countries. WFD thanks for the Chairperson of the Committee for sending a video message for the opening ceremony of the WFD Congress. I would like to share some points from the resolutions of the Congress with you.

The WFD Congress emphasises that deaf people are a crucial part of humanity, with unique cultural and linguistic contributions to human diversity. The resolution reminds us of the importance of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the promotion of the full participation of deaf people in parallel reporting processes. There are concerns about sign languages being endangered around the world and about the lack of awareness of parents of deaf children on the linguistic and cultural human rights of deaf and deaf-blind children. Particularly educational rights of deaf children needs more attention from various stakeholders in order to promote full participation in society, including in higher education, the workforce, and political and civic life.

Accessibility in sign language to health care and information and communication technology should be improved to support human rights of deaf and deaf-blind people in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The WFD Congress encourages the United Nations, its member states and other stakeholders to disseminate information and support independent and neutral research about deaf people especially in the Global South, and to involve deaf people in development projects. These were main points of the WFD Congress Resolution.

Regarding the work of your Committee at the practical level, the WFD has continued encouraging and supporting its member organisations to become involved in parallel reporting processes. Onsite training by a deaf trainer on the parallel reporting has been provided to deaf leaders in Azerbaijan, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mongolia, and most recently in Serbia. In the near future, WFD training will be conducted in Colombia.

Foreseeing the next elections of the Committee taking place next year, the WFD has been working with its member organisations to convince governments to nominate a deaf person whose primary language is sign language to become candidate.

WFD looks forward to continuing good cooperation with the Committee and its members.

Thank you.