

From: Stockholm, Sweden
When: March 19th, 2010
To: Ms. Claire Anderson, Conference Chair
21st Int'l Congress on Education of the Deaf
c/o Advance Group Conference Management Inc.
101 Alberni St., Vancouver, BC Canada V6G 2Z4

HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE

Dear Ms. Anderson,

On behalf of DNUR (Dövas Nordiska Ungdoms Råd), **The Swedish Deaf Youth Association, SDU**, are writing an open letter to Vancouver Organizing Committee 2010 of the International Congress on Education of the Deaf.

SDU and DNUR, that is a Nordic board for young deaf with representatives from each Nordic country; Finland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, **demand** that ICED officially **apologize** for the 1880 ICED resolutions and **accept** the resolution adopted by the World Federation of the Deaf at its 15th Congress in Madrid 2007.

An official apology from the International Congress on Education of the Deaf will ensure that we will all work together to recognize Sign languages in Deaf education and that teachers for the Deaf are competent to teach in Sign and to provide an effective bilingual education.

Sincerely,

For The Board of the Swedish Deaf Youth Association



Henrik Sundqvist
President

with

The Finnish Association of the Deaf,
Icelandic Deaf Youth Association,
The Faroese Deaf Association,
The Norwegian Association of the Deaf Youth and,
Danish Deaf Youth Association

15TH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF
16-22 July 2007, Madrid, Spain

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), its Members and the participants at the 15th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Madrid, Spain, 16-22 July 2007,

Reaffirming that deaf people are entitled to the same human rights as all social groups and that diversity is an intrinsic factor in the Deaf Community,

Recognising the importance of children and youth; deafblind; deaf with disabilities; immigrants; Indigenous peoples; Lesbians, Gays, Transgenders and Bisexuals; people in rural areas; religious minorities; senior citizens; and all deaf people as citizens of society with the same rights and obligations as other citizens,

Emphasising that by adopting positive actions, equality among all will be accelerated,

Emphasising that sign language is a human right for all members of the Deaf Community, including those who use assistive devices and implants,

Reaffirming that multi-lingual education in sign language gives deaf and hard of hearing people the best opportunity to achieve full citizenship and enjoyment of all human rights,

Have agreed that WFD and its Members:

- Have an obligation to work together to promote government ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities thus assuring deaf people full attainment of all human rights on an equal basis with other citizens.
- Must work together as a collective group, and those from developed countries must work in close partnership with those from developing countries.
- Must adopt measures to educate and to sensitise the Deaf Community about the diverse variety of peoples and cultures within the larger Deaf culture.
- Must promote gender-equality programmes and policies to ensure the full development and empowerment of women, and adopt measures that combat violence and abuse against deaf women.
- Have responsibility to preserve, promote and protect sign languages and cultural heritages; and to formulate language policies to empower sign language, including indigenous sign languages.
- Have obligation to co-operate closely with schools and educational authorities to promote deaf children's right to receive a multi-lingual/multi-cultural education and to implement training programmes to develop healthy identities for all deaf children, their families and CODA children.
- Should also protect the rights of children with cochlear implants and other sensory modification technologies to an education in sign language.
- Are responsible to sanction the employment of Deaf professionals in all fields that have an impact on the lives of Deaf people.
- Must promote the development of appropriate training programmes and qualifications for sign language interpreters, and follow WFD principles of co-operation with interpreters.
- Must incorporate the principles of consistent application of universal design with technological innovations of new products and services.

- Must formulate a statement of Deaf bioethics concerns and priorities, and quality medical and surgical care for deaf people, based on human rights principles.
- Have obligation to establish mentorship and positive leadership programmes for deaf youth, and involve them actively in political decision-making and implementation.
- Have responsibility to promote employment and self-sufficiency through Deaf economic empowerment.
- Are responsible to promote equal access to mental health services for all deaf people.

Programmes and actions developed by WFD and its OMs must take account of all deaf people. Special attention should be given to education in both developed and developing countries in order to eliminate any further disadvantage, which brings as a consequence unemployment, poverty, poor health and the lack of self-determination.

Education for deaf people, especially in developing countries, must be an initiative of Deaf persons from that country in order to include and impart their native sign language(s) and culture.

The linguistic and cultural rights of deaf immigrants must be respected as well as assistance provided in learning the language and culture of their new country.

Sign language interpreters are a fundamental resource in achieving human rights and full access. The term sign language interpreter is a concept inclusive not only of hearing sign language interpreters but also Deaf sign language interpreters and interpreter guides for deafblind people.

Technology and e-learning offer access to information, are vital for structured and informal learning and promote independency. The principles of universal design will ensure full communication access and fulfilment of deaf persons' human rights.

Equal and appropriate access to mental health services, through sign language and Deaf culture and by the provisioning of Deaf professional staff, is a basic human right of deaf people.

In reference to the growing demographic of an aging population, attention must be given to programmes and services for deaf senior citizens.

Sign languages serve as vital instruments to transmit culture and knowledge. The status and recognition of sign languages around the world will be strengthened through language policies, research and the preservation of and the teaching of sign languages. Sign languages should be a part of all national curricula.

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), its Members and the participants at the 15th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf agree to promote and implement this Congress

Resolution to all governments and authorities, demanding respect for the realisation of

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