



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF



For immediate release
Wednesday, 17 July 2013

A MILESTONE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IN THE UNITED NATIONS

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) congratulates the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management for the initiative of providing International Sign interpreters (including two interpreters who are themselves deaf) and captions during the Civil Society Forum (CSF) and the 6th Conference of State Parties (COSP) at the United Nations in New York, also visible on the UN live webcast this week.

The UN-DESA works with stakeholders that assist countries around the world to meet their economic, social and environmental goals. The UN-DESA is responsible for the developmental pillar of the United Nations. One of DESA's responsibilities includes facilitating UN meetings such as the CSF and COSP events.

The Enable Daily Bulletin from the Conference on Tuesday, 16 July announced that the entire Forum was webcast live from the UN and included for the first time, International Sign interpretation and close captioning.

WFD Honorary President, Dr. Markku Jokinen said, *"I am happy to see that the UN has worked with the WFD and WASLI to develop the interpreting and captioning services for the Conference of State Parties."*

WASLI Past President, Ms Liz Scott Gibson added that *the UN is to be congratulated for ensuring the webcast transmission of sign language interpretation of the 6th COSP meeting in New York.*

Current WASLI President, Dr Debra Russell, wishes to extend her message that WASLI is very pleased to see the UN taking such positive action to ensure that all citizens of the world have access to the information at these meetings. The inclusion of deaf interpreters as part of the service model is key to its success and we look forward to seeing the ways in which the linguistic rights of deaf people continue to be support by the UN.

And Colin Allen, the current president of the WFD says he expects that International Sign interpreters and captions will be included in the upcoming High Level Meeting on Disability and Development this September 23rd in which he will be participating as the Second Vice Chair representative for the International Disability Alliance, and that this will be a benchmark for the inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing people in all of UN meetings, conferences and events in the near future.

Contact details:

WFD Liaison Officer, Peggy Prosser: peggy.prosser@kl-deaf.fi
Tel: +358 9 580 3573, Fax: +358 9 580 3572

