



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO and WHO

PO Box 65, FIN-00401 Helsinki, FINLAND

FAX: +358 9 580 3572

www.wfdeaf.org

President

MARKKU JOKINEN

Email: wfd@kl-deaf.fi

Fact Sheet

HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the most important priorities in the work of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is to ensure human rights for Deaf people all over the world, in every aspect of life. All human rights which apply to non-Deaf people also apply to Deaf people. Unfortunately, though, the rights of Deaf people are often overlooked, especially in developing countries. In 1990, the United Nations (UN) started giving more focus to the human rights of people with disabilities. Within this focus, WFD advises the UN and its agencies on specific issues and policies which affect Deaf people.

The UN has several documents which WFD uses to promote human rights for Deaf people. Among these are:

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1990)

- People with disabilities are members of society. They should receive the support they need within the ordinary structures of education, health, employment, and social services.
- As people with disabilities achieve equal rights they should also have equal obligations. As part of the process, provision should be made to assist people with disabilities to assume full responsibility as members of society.

STANDARD RULES ON THE EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (UN 1993)

In 1993, the UN General Assembly recognised the importance of creating universal standards for human rights for people with disabilities. The Standard Rules provide guidelines for the following areas:

1. Awareness-raising
2. Support services
3. Accessibility
4. Education
5. Employment
6. Rehabilitation
7. Income Maintenance and Social Security
8. Family life and personal integrity
9. Culture
10. Medical Issues
11. Laws
12. Recreation and Sports

SALAMANCA STATEMENT ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (UNESCO 1994)

Item 21: The importance of sign language as the medium of communication among Deaf people should be recognised and provision made to ensure that all Deaf people have access to education in their national sign language. Owing to the particular communication needs of Deaf and Deafblind people, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or classes and units in mainstream schools.

There are many other UN conventions and human rights documents. In using these, WFD brings attention to specific human rights needs of Deaf people.

For more information about WFD and its human rights work, contact:

World Federation of the Deaf
General Secretariat
PO Box 65
00401 Helsinki
Finland

FAX: +358 9 580 3572

Email: info@wfdeaf.org

Website: www.wfdeaf.org