Letter of Support
between
World Federation of the Deaf and Deaf Skills International Association

1. INTRODUCTION

This Letter of Support (the ‘LoS’) outlines the roles and responsibilities for a mutually agreed collaborative relationship between the World Federation of the Deaf (the ‘WFD’) located in Helsinki, Finland and Deaf Skills International Association (‘DSIA’) located in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (together, the ‘Parties’):

IN WHICH: the official languages for communication, in person and in writing between WFD and DSIA are International Sign and written English respectively.

IN WHICH: the LoS recognises that the Parties are independent international non-governmental, non-profit organisations as described in point 2.

IN WHICH: the Parties are represented respectively by the WFD President, Colin Allen, and DSIA President, Ivanov Stanislav (or their appointed representatives).

IN WHICH: the LoS respects the Parties’ respective philosophies.

IN WHICH: the LoS is presented as an agreement and is not intended to be legally binding.

2. BACKGROUND

World Federation of the Deaf
Established in Rome, Italy, in 1951, the WFD is an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation of deaf associations with a current membership of 133 countries worldwide. Associate members, international members and individual members also make up the WFD’s membership base. The WFD has eight Regional Secretariats and one Co-operating Member. The WFD Youth Section is also part of the WFD. The WFD is based in Helsinki, Finland, where the WFD Secretariat operates. The vision of the WFD is to promote the human rights of deaf people including recognition of sign language(s) in all aspects of life. To fulfil its mission, the WFD partners with the United Nations and its agencies, national organisations of deaf people, and other relevant stakeholders.

Deaf Skills International Association
The DSIA was founded in 2015 and was registered in 2016 in The Netherlands as an Association promoting Professional Skill Competitions for deaf people.

The DSIA movement unites champions, experts and sponsors in projects and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life, economic and professional development of deaf people worldwide.

The DSIA is not just a system of championships but a multi-stage framework involving the expert community with the intention of establishing a system of early career guidance, new learning technologies, and a viable structure designed to enhance the employment of deaf people.

3. RATIONALE

World Federation of the Deaf
The WFD works towards the global achievement of human rights for all deaf people and conducts its activities with the goal of equalisation of opportunities and full participation in society by deaf individuals in every country in accordance with the principles and objectives of the United Nations (UN) Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and other general acts and recommendations of the UN and its specialised agencies.
Its aims are:
- to advocate for an accessible society, including a bilingual educational environment as well as services and information provided in sign language, where deaf people can enjoy the same human rights as all other people.
- to promote the establishment of local, national and regional organisations of deaf people and to guide and support activities of all its members.
- to ensure that deaf people in every country have the right to promote and preserve their own sign language/s and receive support for the advancement of their cultural and linguistic identities.

**Deaf Skills International Association**
The mission of DSIA is to assist deaf people in obtaining quality professional education, the development of professional competencies and employment, as well as raising public attention and the attention of major employers to the professional capabilities of deaf people.

Its aims are:
- to facilitate deaf people achieving professional independence and improvement in their vocational skills.
- to enhance the public perception of the professional capabilities of deaf people and their participation in social and economic life.
- to support the full integration of deaf people into society, paying particular attention to their professional development.
- to promote international exchange and friendship among the participants.
- to promote the involvement of the relevant authorities of the participating countries in the process of improving the vocational skills and careers of deaf people.

4. **PURPOSE**

- The Parties recognise that they share common values in promoting the human rights of deaf people through sign language(s).
- The Parties agree to reasonably cooperate and collaborate on opportunities that contribute to the shared values, including providing leadership and advocacy to Deaf Communities.

Have therefore agreed on the following:

5. **AREAS OF CO-OPERATION**

Cooperation between both Parties will focus on the following areas of work:
- encouragement of collaborative agreements and activities between National Associations of the Deaf, industry, government and institutions
- promotion of deaf people’s human rights in all areas of life in line with the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- promotion of and support towards the recognition of national sign languages

6. **CONSULTATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

The Parties shall, on a regular basis, keep each other informed of and consult on matters of common interest, which in their respective opinions are likely to require mutual collaboration.

Regular meetings shall be convened between representatives of both Parties to coordinate work planning and projects so as to avoid duplication of services and resources.

Consultation and exchange of information and documents under this clause shall be without prejudice to arrangements which may be required to safeguard the confidential and restricted character of certain information and documents.

The Parties may invite each other to send observers to the WFD / DSIA General Assemblies and General Meetings as well as to meetings, conferences and competitions convened by them or under their auspices in which, in the opinion of either Party, the other may have an interest. Any fees or travel costs related to the
attendance of the observer from a Party shall be covered by each respective organisation and shall not be the responsibility of the inviting Party.

7. REPRESENTATION

As both Parties represent the Deaf Community at international meetings, conferences and competitions, clear delineation of the roles of both Parties is required so as to avoid duplication of services and resources and to ensure full representation of Deaf Community in any meeting and conference.

Each Party shall respect the scope of representation of the other Party.

Both Parties recognise the primacy of WFD in advancing the human rights, cultural, educational and sign language rights of deaf people throughout the world.

Both Parties recognise the primacy of DSIA in advancing all matters related to the development of professional education and vocational skills by deaf people.

Each Party may inform the other Party if they are unable to attend a meeting, conference or competition that relates to its scope of representation. In this case, it may delegate its mandate to the other Party for the meeting or conference concerned.

8. DURATION

The LoS shall become effective upon signature by the authorised representatives from the WFD and DSIA, and will remain in effect unless it is revised (pursuant to point 10) or terminated in writing (pursuant to point 11).

9. REVIEW

The LoS shall be periodically reviewed every one (1) year from the date of signing.

10. REVISION

Any variation to the LoS shall be made in writing and signed by both Parties.

11. TERMINATION

Both Parties shall have the right to terminate the LoS by giving at least thirty (30) days’ notice in writing.

12. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Parties shall attempt in good faith to resolve any dispute derived from the LoS by means of consultation and negotiation between the Parties.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

- The parties agree and acknowledge that both the terms of this LoS and the discussions relating to the collaborative activity of the Parties are confidential and neither party will disclose them without the prior written consent of the other party.
- Each party agrees that it shall not at any time disclose to any person any confidential information concerning the activities, business, or affairs of the other party except as permitted below:

  a) To its employees, officers, or advisers who need to know such information for the purposes of carrying out this LoS. Each party shall ensure that its employees, officers, or advisers to whom it discloses the other party’s confidential information comply with this clause; and
  b) As may be required by law, court order, or by any governmental or regulatory authority.
• No party shall use or disclose any other party's confidential information for any purpose other than to perform its obligations under this LoS.

14. ENTRY INTO FORCE

By signing below, the Parties agree to the above roles and responsibilities outlined in the LoS.

There are no expressed or implied conditions, warranties, promises, representations or obligations, written or oral, or signed in relation to the LoS other than those explicitly stated in it or necessarily implied by international law.

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

Signed at Kazan, Russian Federation on the 27 April, 2017

Mr Colin Allen, President

Dr Joseph Murray, Vice-President

DEAF SKILLS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Signed at Kazan, Russian Federation on the 27 April, 2017

Mr Ivanov Stanislav, President

Ms. Lidia Frolova, Vice President