



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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# PRESS RELEASE

## Deaf Association of Korea achieves a WORLD FIRST

In a world first, the Deaf Association of Korea (DAK) has become the first Disabled Person's Organisation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to become a full member of an International Disabled Person's Organisation - World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

The WFD is delighted to announce the approval of its 136th Ordinary Member, the Deaf Association of Korea (DAK) from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

This is the culmination of an eleven year collaboration, initially between the WFD and Korean Federation for the Protection of the Disabled (KFPD), the latter being the peak organisation of persons with disabilities within Korea, of which the DAK is a member. During the period, the WFD worked with DAK to ensure empowerment of deaf people within that nation. This has included ensuring awareness of their right to education and sign language by deaf people and emphasising the importance of deaf leadership within the deaf association.

There have been many exciting moments along the way, not the least of which was DAK representatives participating in the XVII World Congress of the WFD in Istanbul, Turkey in mid 2015. This provided the opportunity for the DAK members to meet other deaf people from around the world but very significantly, their deaf counterparts from the Republic of Korea for the first time.

It is anticipated that membership of WFD will bring mutual benefit to both the DAK and WFD and also to the international Deaf Community. Of prime importance is the cementing of the co-operative relationship between the two organisations and the contribution of DAK to WFD's goal of promoting sign language worldwide. WFD will assist DAK to further improve the living conditions and opportunities for deaf people nationally in all spheres of life including civil society and education and in the cultural, artistic and sporting realm in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In reflecting on this breakthrough, Mr Colin Allen AM, President of WFD stated that *"WFD is thrilled as we see this as a real coup for the Deaf Association of Korea. Nevertheless, this is only the beginning as we expect this development will benefit not only the Deaf Community but also deaf youth and sign language interpreters in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea into the future"*.

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### **About the World Federation of the Deaf**

*The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international non-governmental organisation representing and promoting approximately 70 million deaf people's human rights worldwide. The WFD is a federation of deaf organisations from 136 nations; its mission is to promote the human rights of deaf people and full, quality and equal access to all spheres of life, including self-determination, sign language*

### **About the Deaf Association of Korea**

*The Deaf Association of Korea is an independent and non-governmental organisation established in 2012, sanctioned by the national Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It works to represent and realise the rights and interests of deaf people in political, economic and cultural fields.*