



Press Release

Canada Ratifies United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Canadians with Disabilities Celebrate

Thursday March 11, 2010

For immediate release

Joy and celebration are the two primary emotions felt today by many Canadians with disabilities as the Government of Canada ratifies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the United Nations. Canada today pledged to be governed by the CRPD, the newest international human rights treaty which boldly articulates a human rights framework for addressing the exclusion and lack of access people with disabilities have encountered in Canada and in all societies.

The dream of a more inclusive and accessible Canada motivated Canadians with disabilities and the Government of Canada to engage in a five year process to create the CRPD. CCD applauds the Government of Canada's leadership during the drafting and the steadfast commitment to a CRPD that is built upon Canadian values of equality, non-discrimination and the duty to accommodate.

The CRPD is a product of a historic partnership between the global movement of people with disabilities and their governments. Many in the government of Canada championed the cause of the CRPD. One of our first standard bearers was the Hon. Peter MacKay, then Minister of Foreign Affairs. Even when he accepted new responsibilities, Minister MacKay continued to demonstrate leadership on this file and to a large extent it is his good work that led the way forward to today's historic event. Equally, the Hon. Diane Finley through her department, supported the disability community to contribute to the drafting of the CRPD and to participate on the Canadian delegation that worked on this great endeavor at the United Nations. Steve Estey, Chair of CCD's International Committee attended all of the Ad Hoc Committee meetings in New York and was a member of the Canadian delegation at the UN that worked on the development of the CRPD. He and Anna MacQuarrie of CACL have shown exemplary leadership within the disability community on this file.

"Today's ratification by the Government of Canada signals the end of an era where people with disabilities were seen as objects of charity and passive recipients of rehabilitation and state-supported largesse. Today ushers in a new era where people with disabilities are viewed as full citizens with exactly the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens of Canada," stated Estey.

"The CRPD is not simply another well-intentioned declaration without any teeth. It requires the Government of Canada to act and monitor progress in achieving the commitments of the treaty. Canada's actions to create a more accessible and inclusive society will be the subject of both domestic and international scrutiny," said Marie White National Chairperson of CCD. "Today we celebrate at the international level Canadian leadership on disability issues but tomorrow we get down to work on the domestic agenda of removing barriers that prohibit the full and equal participation of Canadians with disabilities," stated White.

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For More Information Contact:

Laurie Beachell, CCD National Coordinator – Tel: 204 947-0303

ccd@ccdonline.ca

ccdonline.ca

Tel/Tél: 204-947-0303
Fax/Télé: 204-942-4625
TTY: 204-943-4757
Toll Free/Sans Frais: 1-877-947-0303

926-294 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0B9
Canada