



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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President

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Mr Fujisaburo Ishino
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4th June 2017

Re: Congratulations to the Japanese Federation of the Deaf - 70th Anniversary

On behalf of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations on hosting the 65th National Congress commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD) at which it will be an honour to have the presence of His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino and Her Imperial Highness Princess Akishino.

As an international non-governmental organisation, representing 133 country members, it is with great pride that the WFD has maintained long-standing co-operation with the Japanese Federation of the Deaf after the JFD became a full member of the WFD in 1959.

Over the years, this close collaboration has yielded positive changes particularly through the JFD's involvement in the WFD Regional Secretariat of the Asia and Pacific Region between 1985 and 2015, during which time, members undertook roles in a voluntary capacity within the Regional body. The JFD hosted a number of Regional Representatives meetings as well as organising a number of workshops/conferences to advocate for deaf human rights in which sign language is a mandatory component, in the region. Of particular note was the hosting of the XI World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Tokyo by the JFD in 1991 which saw the largest number of Congress Participants ever attend, numbering more than 7,000; which remains a record in attendance terms of delegates to the WFD Congress. The WFD Board would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Mr Eiichi Takada for his dedicated service as a member of the WFD Board between 1991-2003 with him since becoming an honorary board member.

The JFD has created a strong partnership with a number of national Deaf Communities in developing countries by providing training to empower and build the capacity of Deaf Organisations by enhancing the leadership skills of deaf people within the local Deaf Community.

There are many shared values between the work of the JFD and the WFD. Your pursuit of improving human rights complements the WFD's mission to advance the human rights of deaf people especially through promoting recognition of Japanese Sign Language as a legally recognised language.

The WFD wishes to acknowledge the humanitarian response by the JFD to natural disasters which deaf people in Japan have experienced including the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011. Following another big quake which hit Kumamoto, in the neighboring area of Fukuoka in the last year, the JFD, most particularly the regional Federation of the Kyushu area, worked tirelessly to support disaster relief to deaf people. Assistance also extended to nearby Asian countries such as providing support to the Deaf Community in Nepal during the earthquake in 2015.

The WFD recognises and values the JFD's commitment to disaster response including their willingness to share their experiences and expertise on a global level to support deaf people impacted by earthquakes with the aim of creating a safer community for all deaf people.

We are aware that one of the primary goals of the Japanese Deaf Community is to advocate for your sign language rights; work which is carried out by the JFD with the knowledge that sign language is integral to all aspects of life, a fact that needs to be recognised and adopted by the Japanese Government based on the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) - Article 2, 9, 21, 24 and 30. We are certain that when this is accomplished, hopefully in the near future, that the Japanese Deaf Community will experience greater equality as citizens in receipt of Government services through Japanese Sign Language.

The JFD invited the WFD to host our 112th WFD Board Meeting which was held between 29th May and 2nd June 2017 in Fukuoka, Japan. The WFD Board wishes to thank the Fukuoka Prefectural Deaf Association which contributed significantly to making our board meeting successful.

Thank you for your ongoing support; WFD truly appreciates this partnership and we wish you and your board continued success for many more years to come.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke, likely belonging to Colin Allen.

Colin Allen
President
World Federation of the Deaf

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 133 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, education, employment and community life. WFD has a consultative status in the United Nations and is a founding member of International Disability Alliance (IDA). (www.wfdeaf.org) Email: info@wfd.fi