

## **World Federation of the Deaf**

Distinguished Delegates,

My name is Joe Murray and I'm the president of the World Federation of the Deaf. We represent a constituency of seventy million deaf people globally, from 136 countries. We are a minority that works within the disability movement, but we also petition for the rights of sign language -using deaf people. We want to make sure that the intangible heritage of sign language communities is preserved. We know that the use of sign language protects and promotes multilingualism across the world. And it's clear that each cultural, linguistic and minority ethnic group has deaf people within it. Clearly, deaf people, who are sign language users are part of the global intersectionality. Our goal is to make sure we have full recognition of sign languages for sign language using deaf peoples across the globe. At the moment, it's clear within the UN convention of the rights with people with disabilities article 2, promotes the use of sign language, and yet when we look at governments across the globe there are only 40% of UN state parties that have recognized sign languages. 60% of state parties are yet to recognize sign languages. Often this means that deaf children do not have access to sign language education. There are over 200 recognized sign languages, national sign languages in the world and we need to make sure that deaf children have access to education with deaf peers, with teachers who are fluent in their national sign languages and can provide a role model for them. This would also mean that we can grow the use of sign languages within national contexts. We promote the recognition of sign languages in each member state within the United Nations so that deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere. Join us.