**WBU Statement on International day of persons with disabilities, December 2017**

Over 1 billion people worldwide are disabled, and majority of disabled people are from developing countries. Many of them live in poverty, face discrimination, and are denied basic opportunities for growth.

On **December 3**, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the World Blind Union (WBU) is appealing for the inclusion of the estimated 253 million blind and partially sighted people worldwide.   
  
Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), significant progress has been made towards the full inclusion of people with disabilities. However, the challenge now is for governments to implement these instruments and put all the necessary mechanisms in place to eradicate any barriers that impinge on the rights of blind and visually impaired people.

To ensure effective implementation of the international human rights instruments including the UNCRPD, SDGs, and the Marrakesh Treaty, WBU is urging governments to consider the following actions:

* To implement monitoring and follow up mechanisms at the national level.
* To consult representatives of disabled people organizations when designing and implementing policies related to people with disabilities.
* To collect disaggregated data on disability.
* To provide financial resources for full inclusion of people with disabilities in development processes.
* To take into consideration issues experienced by vulnerable groups such as blind and partially sighted women and children, migrants, people living in rural areas and refugees.
* To promote staff training in all sectors to ensure that human rights of blind and visually impaired people are respected, protected and promoted.

This year's theme is “**Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all**”. To achieve this theme, the WBU is calling for a global effort to accelerate the process towards an inclusive society where blind and partially sighted people can fully enjoy their fundamental rights such as access to communication and information including reading materials in braille, large print and tactile format; inclusive education settings, availability of technical visual aids and employment opportunities.   
  
"Now is the time to transform our communities into inclusive and equitable environments where everyone’s rights are respected, protected and promoted", says Jose María Viera, the WBU Human Rights Policy Advisor.

The WBU has developed a toolkit to help organizations work with local and national governments to implement the Human Rights spelled out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The toolkit is available for download on our website:   
<http://www.worldblindunion.org/English/resources/Pages/Toolkits.aspx>

*The World Blind Union (WBU) is the global organization that represents the estimated 253 million people worldwide who are blind or partially sighted. Members consist of organizations of blind people advocating on their own behalf and organizations that serve the blind, in over 190 countries, as well as international organizations working in the field of vision impairment. Visit our website at* [www.worldblindunion.org/](http://www.worldblindunion.org/)

For further information, please contact:

Terry Mutuku  
Communications Officer, World Blind Union  
[Terry.Mutuku@wbu.ngo](mailto:Terry.Mutuku@wbu.ngo)

For more information regarding the International Day of Persons with Disabilities visit the UN website: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-3-december/idpd2017.html>