

East Wind No. 35

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Official Newsletter of the World Blind Union – Asia Pacific (WBUAP)

“The Voice of The Blind and Visually Impaired in The Asia Pacific Region”

Please visit the World Blind Union – Asia Pacific website

<https://wbuap.org/>

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Editorial

Mary Schnackenberg writes:

I am pleased to send out this issue of East Wind. Again we have a range of information, including some items From The Media.

You will see a reminder about the region's Mid-Term Regional General Assembly (MRGA). I am aware a notice was sent to the region's delegates early in July which may not have reached some of you. Please read the article about the MRGA and check out the website links.

Happy reading.

Mid-Term Regional General Assembly Reminder

As some of you may have heard, there is an exciting event coming up from 27 to 29 November this year. It is the Mid-Term Regional General Assembly (MRGA) of the Asia Pacific Region of the World Blind Union. The theme is Connecting Community, Information and Life.

Highlight Topics are:

Smart Cities;
Digital Literacy;
Assistive Technology;
Transportation;
Organization Development; and more.

The official language of the MRGA is English.

The opening plenary session will start with "Smart Cities" on the first day, Monday 27 November. Day 2 will begin with a panel discussion about "Organization Management". That will be followed by 3 breakout rooms on "Leadership", "Access to resources" and "Community outreach".

The Gala Dinner will be on the evening of Tuesday 28 November. This will be a time of joy and friendship for all as we get to know one another better.

The program is growing as we write so check for updates here:

<https://www.tab.or.th/wbuap2023>.

There will be exhibitors at the MRGA who will help you to catch up with a range of gadgets and devices.

The venue where you will stay and attend the MRGA is Duangjitt Resort and Spa, Phuket, Thailand. It is a peaceful, natural environment that is safe for everyone.

To read all about Duangjitt Resort and Spa go to:

<https://www.duangjittresort-spa.com>.

On Thursday 30 November optional tourist visits are planned for you. More details are on the registration form and further information will come soon.

To help us with our planning, please register and make your payment by Thursday 31 August 2023.

Before you register, please check if you have to get a visa into Thailand before you leave your country. You can find a list of visa waver countries and territories at the following link which opens a PDF:

<https://image.mfa.go.th/mfa/0/zE6021nSnu/%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A3/VOA.pdf>.

Now here is the link to the MRGA registration form:

<https://www.tab.or.th/wbuap-registration/>.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the MRGA.

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World Blind Union Executive Committee Meeting May 2023

Mary Schnackenberg writes:

I acknowledge with appreciation contributions to this article from two published sources. Clive Lansink, in his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind published his report on this meeting in the Board Agenda Pack provided to observers of the Board meeting held on 1 July 2023. Dr. Jonathan Godfrey, the National President of Blind Citizens NZ, published some comments in their magazine, Focus, June 2023. In addition, the Regional President of WBUAP, Peter Li, sent an email summarising his experiences of the meeting to the Board and Policy Council of WBUAP.

The World Blind Union held its Executive Committee meeting in Wellington from Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June. A lot of people attended in person but a Zoom option was also available. I attended in person on the first three days.

The first day was devoted to subcommittee meetings and I did not observe these. On Monday evening the delegation from Brazil pitched for Brazil to host the 2025 World Blind Union General Assembly. The other country bidding to host this was Canada.

Tuesday began with a pōwhiri, a Māori welcoming ceremony, involving whaikōrero (formal speech), waiata (singing) and kai (food). This was led by Kāpō Māori Aotearoa. Māori is the name of New Zealand's First Nations (indigenous) people. Kāpō is the Māori word for blind.

Blind Citizens NZ National President Dr Jonathan Godfrey said it was an absolute pleasure to welcome everyone. He warmly thanked many contributors to organising the meeting, including Government officials who worked to sort out immigration issues, staff at the Brentwood Hotel who provided the accommodation and meals, the Chief Executive of Blind Citizens NZ (Rose Wilkinson) and more. He talked about the work of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism, and briefly explained the role of

the Disabled People's Organisations Coalition and the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission. The Independent Monitoring Mechanism checks and reports on how New Zealand is implementing the UN Disability Convention which we ratified in 2008. Later the blind Senator from the Parliament of Zimbabwe expressed surprise that the DPO Coalition could criticise government whilst still being funded in part by the government.

We understand that New Zealand is the only country in the world to have its own Ministry of Disabled People. So we heard from the Chief Executive of Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, Paula Tesoriero. She explained Whaikaha's role to transform the disability support system. Our dream is that Whaikaha will shift the focus from the medical/health model of disability to a social model and human rights based model where disabled people can choose how to live our lives, the concept we call “Enabling Good Lives”.

Clive Lansink, as chair of the Board of Directors of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind welcomed everyone, especially visitors to New Zealand. The RNZFB (trading as Blind Low Vision NZ) is New Zealand's largest provider of blindness services. He applauded the work of WBU, referring briefly to the Marrakesh Treaty, silent cars and access to the urban environment, and their focus on advancing the cause of blind, deafblind and low vision people, particularly in developing countries.

In her address as President, Martine Abel-Williamson explained why this meeting was held in person rather than online. It's about the fellowship and growing understanding that comes from conversations between the formal sessions. As it happens, there was an online option which some attended, mostly New Zealanders who had no problem with the time zone!

Following the formal welcome and morning tea there was a roll call with the microphone going around everyone at tables in the room. As many as 20 countries were in attendance. Several members of the WBUAP Board and Policy Council were at our region's table. I was very pleased to meet the people behind the voices who I had not previously met when I was able to go to Bangkok in January 2017.

President Martine then reported on her activities since the September 2022 Executive Committee meeting.

The remainder of the morning was taken up by the Chief Executive's and the Treasurer's reports. Then there was a report from a WBU representative to the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), which explored how ICEVI and WBU can share statements on education.

Regional Reports and committee and working group reports were taken in the afternoon.

The European Blind Union (EBU) talked about the work concerning blind people in the Ukraine. There is a Manifesto about free and fair elections for the 2024 European Union Parliament. They also referred to the importance of the Accessibility Act.

The Asia Pacific region promoted the Mid-Term Regional General Assembly being held in Thailand in November 2023. The Thai delegation was very popular with their attractive small gifts.

There was a report on progress of WBU's strategic plan. It referred to strengthening advocacy on health services, access to information, reducing discrimination on grounds of disability, strengthening liaison with other international organisations, and climate change and humanitarian crises and including blindness organisations in national emergency planning.

Martine explained that the International Guide Dogs Federation is affiliated with WBU. The IGDF had met for the first time in a number of years in Vancouver Canada, about 300 attendees. They focused on guide dog schools and their programs. It was said this was a very positive event, but a comment was also made that the federation needs to put more emphasis on hearing from end users. There was discussion concerning how the IGDF could work with WBU to make it easier for people to travel internationally with their guide dogs.

Thomas Bryan, who is also the Treasurer of WBUAP, spoke about his work as Chair of the Access to Environment Committee. This is a small group and needs new people. It is important cities work well for blind people so we can participate fully in modern urban life.

Martine spoke about the Marrakesh Treaty. A representative from Sightsavers International has been appointed as WBU's new link to the Accessible Books Consortium. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is helping publishers to attend online seminars about accessible production of books. Also authorised entities are being taught how to produce accessible format books. We must strive to ensure that blindness agencies upload their accessible format titles to the Accessible Books Consortium global catalogue so they can be shared with everyone.

Deafblind International has launched a global campaign for the right to education for people who are deafblind. Initially this campaign will focus on three regions, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

On Wednesday morning there were presentations from Canada and Brazil about the venue of the 2025 World Blind Union General Assembly. Following a question and answer session, Canadian and Brazilian delegates left the room and the vote was held. The decision to go with Sao Paulo in Brazil was unanimous.

There was a review and discussion of the WBU Policy on Responding to Emergency Situations which was originally written in 2011. It was recommended the 2011 Policy be retained. Information was provided about UN sponsored implementation guides.

The WBU 2022 audited financial statements were approved and an investment policy was adopted.

There was some discussion about membership of WBU. The state of Kiribati which is in our region was admitted as a new member.

A 2021 General Assembly resolution asked for a review of how member organisations are being classified for fees. Handling membership fees and subsidies takes up much time in administration. The Membership Committee, Finance Committee and Constitution Committee will collaborate to think about the consequences of the current fee structure. Communication with members was also discussed. How should members who have not paid their fees be supported? What are the direct benefits for members of WBU?

Both consumer organisations and service providers are represented in the WBU. Staff and board members of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind as well as Vision Australia, NextSense, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind were among the service providers present.

President Martine's history with WBU has been as a consumer organisation representative. She guided the meeting with, in my opinion, astute diplomacy. Under her dignified facilitation, a wide range of views were expressed without hesitation. Decisions were taken and outcomes were achieved.

Blind Citizens NZ's National President, Dr. Jonathan Godfrey is a Senior Lecturer in Statistics at Massey University. He is a guide dog user. In the June 2023 issue of Focus he wrote in part: "I had some fascinating conversations with people. While I haven't yet managed to process all the things I learned from others, I did take away that some of the challenges faced by blind people around the world are the same as those we face here:

- access to information in a civil emergency;
- concerns over the future of Braille;
- making sure disabled people understand their rights;
- making sure disabled people enjoy those rights;
- worrying about how a pair of blind people can go out without a sighted assistant.

"OK, I proved the last one by demonstration. By taking a visiting blind person on a walk to a local restaurant and guiding some others to a supermarket. It's clear that the range of issues faced by blind people in other countries includes all the challenges we have here and then some. We do work well as a Disabled People's Organisation and do so with our Government. That doesn't happen by chance, and it certainly does not happen everywhere. I believe we are fortunate in Aotearoa New Zealand to be able to stand up for ourselves as individuals and as a community without fear."

And from my perspective, I keep being reminded that so-called developing countries have much to teach first-world nations. Because of a serious lack of resources, you have to be creative and innovative. And, from my reading, indeed you are.

Introduction of International Standards for Restrooms

The Japan Sanitary Equipment Industry Association /The Accessible Design Foundation of Japan writes:

Have you ever found it difficult to find the flush button when you use public restrooms? ISO 19026 is the standard which helps to solve such problems

ISO 19026 (2015) is an International Standard which specifies shapes and colours of a flushing button and a call button of lavatory which are installed on the wall and their arrangement with a paper dispenser. This International Standard is only applicable in cases of installing a flushing button and/or a call button on the wall of seat-type lavatory in public restrooms (general toilet compartments and toilet compartments with various functions) used by an unspecified large number of people, except restrooms with a big paper holder where it is difficult to place a flushing button and a call button above the holder. Source: <https://www.iso.org/standard/63759.html>.

This International Standard has been developed to solve the following problems.

Since people usually enter restrooms alone, it is difficult to ask other people for help if they do not understand something. This kind of problem requires visually impaired users more time and effort than necessary to understand them because when they enter a restroom, they must first touch the entire wall to confirm the layout and type of facilities with their hands.

Also, users with physical disabilities may find it difficult or impossible to use the flush button or (toilet) paper dispenser depending on their positions, because of incompatibilities with their movement abilities.

In order to solve the problems which users with physical disabilities often have, ISO 19026 was published in 2015.

According to the standard, the (toilet) paper dispenser, flush button, and call button on the wall need to be installed on the side of the toilet seat within the reach of users with physical disabilities while seated on the toilet. The flush button needs to be placed above the (toilet) paper dispenser and the call button needs to be placed behind the toilet seat at the same height as the flush button, so visually impaired users can easily grasp the position by touch. The standard also specifies the shape and colour of the buttons so visually impaired users can differentiate between the flush button and call button by touch.

Arrangement of the buttons and (toilet) paper dispenser is shown on the link below;
https://www.sanitary-net.com/global/about_iso19026/

The link above also shows examples of restrooms to which ISO 19026 have been applied in Japan. Some of the facilities (restrooms) for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games have applied this International Standard.

Call for Applications for the 24th Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan

Applications close September 25, 2023.

This training lasts for about three months when you will be immersed in the Japanese language and culture and learn about services for disabled people in Japan. To read about the training program go to

<https://www.normanet.ne.jp/~duskin/english/our-program/index.html#flow6>

From this year, the age limit has been raised from 30 to 35.

To apply, go to

<https://www.normanet.ne.jp/~duskin/english/apply/index.html>

The Application Guideline is at

<https://www.normanet.ne.jp/~duskin/english/apply/application.html>

Jakarta Declaration from ESCAP

Editor's Note

My thanks to WONG Yoon Loong for this article. Wong looks after Technology and Consumer Products on the WBUAP Board and Policy Council and attended the meeting last October that drew up the next ten-year plan for ESCAP.

Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organised the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 from 19–21 October 2022 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Realising that the 10 goals of the Incheon Strategy were not fully achieved, the meeting proclaim the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032. This is to continue to focus on the effective implementation of the Incheon Strategy and the Beijing Declaration. This includes the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy, underscore the need to make strategic investments for implementation and commit ourselves to taking measures towards disability-inclusive development. This will be achieved through a whole-of-society approach in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, particularly organizations of and for persons with disabilities and private sector entities. The goal is to accelerate action to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities by establishing six priority areas as follows:

- (a) Harmonize national legislations with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, once the Convention has been ratified or acceded to, by conducting comprehensive and regular reviews of national and local legislations as appropriate, providing guidance on the implementation of the Convention by line ministries and governments at all levels, training all personnel involved in law enforcement, integrating the provision of reasonable accommodation in national policies, programmes and budgets, and developing and strengthening frameworks, as appropriate, to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention;
- (b) Promote the meaningful participation of women and men with diverse disabilities of all ages, including by consulting closely and actively involving children and youth with disabilities through their representative organizations, in planning, implementing and making decisions about policies, programmes and political processes through reasonable accommodation, raising awareness and building the capacities of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, as appropriate, and governments at all levels, as well as other stakeholders;
- (c) In the context of paying special attention to the distinct needs of persons with diverse disabilities and of women, children and older persons with disabilities, improve the accessibility of the physical environment, public transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, essential information and services related to disaster risks and public health emergencies and other public services, in both urban and rural areas, and promote universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities by developing national standards and guidelines in line with latest international accessibility standards and guidelines;

- (d) Galvanize the power of the private sector, including its resources, technological innovations and talents, to advance disability-inclusive development by adopting disability-inclusive public procurement policies to promote the application of universal design and accessibility measures to publicly procured infrastructure, information and communications technologies and services, by deploying policy incentives for private companies to take action towards mainstreaming disability inclusion in their workforces, organizations, products, services, market activities and supply chains and by facilitating the development of industry guidelines and protocols, especially in the media, including social media, and the entertainment sector, to promote diversity and inclusion and remove content that could lead to discrimination, stigmatization, stereotyping and misconceptions of persons with disabilities;
- (e) Promote a gender-responsive life cycle approach to developing and implementing disability-related policies and programmes, paying particular attention to:
 - (i) extending both mainstream and disability-specific social protection schemes to cover young children, adolescents, women and older persons with disabilities;
 - (ii) providing early childhood detection and intervention services for children with disabilities as an integral part of strategies, policies, programmes and investments aimed at building human capital;
 - (iii) ensuring continuous and inclusive education for all learners with disabilities; and
 - (iv) responding to discrimination and barriers that women and girls with disabilities, including older women with disabilities, often face in terms of participation and of gaining access to information and services, including sexual and reproductive health services;
- (f) Building upon the information provided by authorized national agencies and other recognized sources, as appropriate, take action to close disability data gaps and strengthen capacities to track progress in disability-inclusive development at the national and subnational levels by producing comparable and quality data disaggregated by sex, age and disability across sectors to inform disability-inclusive policymaking, programme planning and implementation strategies and by incorporating reports on progress made in achieving disability-inclusive development in voluntary national reviews, as appropriate, conducted in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional development frameworks.

An Expert Group Meeting was held on 26-27 June 2023 to share views and feedback on an Operation Guide to guide Governments, CSOs/OPDs in implementing and monitoring the progress of these 6 priority areas. This Guide will be ready in 2024.

From the Media

Disclaimer

We're receiving a number of articles about blind and partially sighted people that have appeared in the newspapers, on radio and television in our region. Over the years some of us have found that articles have turned up in the media about us which we ourselves don't get to read. Thinking about "nothing about us without us" we're reprinting some media articles below.

In this media section of East Wind, the Editor gives priority for selection to articles from countries in the region other than Australia and New Zealand. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of members of the Board and Policy Council or Editorial team of the World Blind Union – Asia Pacific Region. We have not checked the accuracy of the facts in these articles.

Banks to improve services for visually impaired customers

Editor's Note: This article is about banks in South Korea.

Visually impaired people will be able to do their banking business on their own at major local banks by the end of next month. So far, banks have usually required these customers to be accompanied by a guardian, when they plan to open an account or subscribe to banking products.

Such changes come as the Financial Services Commission (FSC), the country's top financial regulator, announced on Sunday that the financial authority and the banking sector have jointly come up with a response manual for the visually impaired. Applying the common manual, local banks vowed to improve their business processing procedures for the visually impaired by no later than the end of July.

With the adoption of the manual, visually impaired people can handle subscription procedures of banking products on their own, without the need for a guardian, at banking branches nationwide. Bank tellers will undergo training to serve visually impaired customers in all steps of the process, facilitating their understanding of a product, signing documents and confirming their contracts.

Yet, banks that cannot implement the changes by next month, are planning to gradually increase the number of branches equipped with necessary help for visually impaired customers. The banks will provide detailed information of bank branches where such help for the visually impaired is available on its website as well as at customer service centers.

In addition, banks will continue to increase the installation of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) with braille inscribed on the buttons and keys to assist visually impaired customers. Banks also plan to further expand the use of braille bankbooks, braille banking cards and voice-based one-time password (OTP) devices.

"After closely monitoring the result of the operation of the manual, the financial authorities and banks will increase the scope of banking products that the visually impaired can subscribe to on their own," an official from the FSC said.

Source: The Korea Times 18 June 2023

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/biz/2023/08/602_353181.html

Official Launching of Samoa's First Braille-translated Disaster Risk Management Awareness Materials/ Booklets

Funded under the NZ Govt NEMA DRM Project

A total of 200 (100 Samoan & 100 English) braille-translated Disaster Risk Management booklets for the benefit of People's with Disabilities in particular the

blind or visually impaired community were officially launched on Monday 19th June, 2023. The launching event was witnessed and attended by a number of esteemed guests to include the Deputy High Commissioner of the NZ High Commission and members of the Umbrella for People with Disabilities, Nuanua ole Alofa (NOLA) & Samoa Blind Persons Association and various organizations that play advocacy roles to support people with disabilities. A milestone and an accomplishment that reflects the government of Samoa's commitment in achieving its global and local obligations around Disaster Risk Management, taking into consideration the Inclusiveness – Whole of Society approach, to ensure that meaning is strongly emphasized to the concept that "No One is Left Behind" in all phases of Disaster Risk Management. The design and development of these braille translated Disaster Risk Management awareness booklets costed a SAT \$33,500.00, generously funded by the NZ Government through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) DRM Project/Programme monitored by the MNRE as the Implementing Agency. The NZ NEMA DRM Project is a six-year project which commenced in 2019 until 2024 with the ultimate goal to strengthen Disaster Risk Management across risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery in targeted Pacific Island Countries to include Samoa.

The Disaster Management Office (DMO) of the MNRE worked in close collaboration with Nuanua ole Alofa (NOLA) & the Samoa Blind Persons Association to bring this initiative into fruition, to ensure that these booklets were produced and made available for ease of access and reference by the blind community. All braille equipment was procured from the Blind People's Association as the only agency qualified to provide the specifications for the booklets. It is understood that disasters are becoming frequent. Sadly, people with disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable to these disasters or hazards, unfortunately there is a lack of disaster-related information and resources available to increase their awareness of the potential risks they are exposed to. For this reason, an initiative to translate the existing disaster risk management awareness materials into braille was successfully delivered basically to support the visually impaired community, providing measures that would build their capacity and enhance their preparedness abilities to respond to the most extreme disasters that Samoa is prone to.

The booklets contain basic information on "What to Do" in the event of disasters such as tropical cyclones, river floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and fire, translated both in Samoan and English. Having these braille booklets developed is a significant achievement for Samoa where the blind persons and visually impaired will, for the first time be able to read these DRM awareness materials to enhance their resilience and preparations in response to disasters & emergencies. Followed by the successful launching event was the hand over presentation of these braille booklets to the Samoa Blind People's Association through NOLA for educational purposes and for dissemination to the blind community.

This milestone achievement further reaffirms Samoa's commitment to contribute positively towards the realization of regional and international goals under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the 2015 Paris Agreement for Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017-2030 and importantly the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 which Samoa has ratified. It is with high hopes that this work is replicated to other priority sectoral activities in Samoa.

The keynote address was delivered by the Acting Chief Executive Officer Moafanua Tolusina Afuvai Pouli on behalf of the Ministry (MNRE) and remarks on behalf of the NZ Government by Deputy High Commissioner, Lavea'i Ioane. Tiaena Herbert Bell on behalf of the Blind Person's Association was given the honour to address few remarks to thank the government and to acknowledge the NZ Government for the financial support to bring this initiative to fruition.

Source: Government of Samoa, June 20 - Monday 19th June, 2023 Lava Hotel, Sogi.

Draft law expands barrier-free label requirement to more products

More products will be required to provide voiceovers, large characters, braille or other barrier-free versions of labels or instructions for consumers, said an official from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

"The requirement is to meet the demand of the elderly and the disabled, offering them more convenience in reading, and it has been written into the new version of a draft law on the construction of barrier-free environment," Zang Tiewei, spokesman of the NPC's Legislative Affairs Commission, told a news conference on Sunday.

He revealed that the new version of the draft will be submitted to an upcoming session of the NPC Standing Committee, which is scheduled to be held from Monday to Wednesday in Beijing, for a third review. In general, a draft will become a law in China after being read three times by the NPC Standing Committee.

According to Zang, the requirement of using barrier-free versions was just applied to instructions on food and drug labels when the NPC Standing Committee had a second review of the draft.

Since then, the commission received 3,285 suggestions from folks of many walks of life, of which, some people - especially the elderly and the visually disabled - complained that the small font and the lack of braille versions made product instructions difficult for them to read.

To help solve the problem, the requirement has been expanded to more products in the new version, clarifying that the barrier-free versions also need to be applied in labels of goods, Zang said.

He added that the new version of the draft also encourages the compilation or publication of textbooks in braille or low-vision versions to meet the reading needs of those who are blind and other visually impaired students.

Source: China Daily 25 Jun 2023

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202306/25/WS6497ea64a310bf8a75d6b766.html>

Solomons Ratifies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Solomon Islands as a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 23rd of September 2008, officially deposited the Instrument of Ratification to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 22nd of June 2023.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted at the sixty first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 13th of December 2006, and entered into force on 3rd of May 2008.

The Solomon Islands Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations, H.E Mrs. Jane Mugafalu Kabui Waetara, officially deposited the instrument of ratification on behalf of the Solomon Islands government, during a ceremony at the United Nations Head Quarter Treaty Office in New York on the 22nd of June 2023.

The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The ratification of the convention will ensure that Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities complements the National Disability Development Policy 2022 -2031 and the Rehabilitation Strategic Plan 2022 -2031, a policy and strategic plan which play an important role in guiding decisions and implementation of activities to ensure Solomon Islanders living with various forms of disabilities can live a normal life, access services, and be able to participate meaningfully in the development of the country.

Source: Solomon Times 27 June 2023

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Next issue of East Wind

Issue No. 36 is due in November 2023. Please send your news by 31 October.

We may edit submissions due to space limitations. Please send your contributions to Mary's email address: <mailto:mary@aicomms.co.nz>.

You should also check out our website <https://wbuap.org/>. If you go to our home page you can sign up to receive updates from our website direct to your inbox or use our RSS feed.

That concludes this issue of East Wind No. 35, August 2023.