



# A Call to Action: UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## Making Domestic Implementation Real and Meaningful

### A CALL TO ACTION

March 11, 2011, marks the first anniversary of Canada's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD is the first international human-rights instrument of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It reaffirms that persons with disabilities throughout the world should enjoy the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) and the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), through consultation and dialogue with the disability community and civil society, are joined by over 130 organizations, thus far, in calling for the Government of Canada, Canada's parliament, provincial and territorial governments, and legislative bodies to work with persons with disabilities, disability organizations, and all other Canadians on the full implementation of the CRPD, to take all appropriate actions to remove barriers experienced by Canadians with disabilities in their effort to participate in all aspects of society.

In the speech from the throne of 2008, the Government of Canada committed to "ensure that all Canadians share in the promise of this land, regardless of cultural background, gender, age, disability or official language. This Government will break down barriers that prevent Canadians from reaching their potential."

We call on the Government of Canada to make further progress toward this commitment by providing strong leadership for the implementation of the CRPD.

The Government of Canada and the Canadian disability community both played leading roles in the creation of the CRPD. As a result, the CRPD has a Canadian feel to its content and underlying values.

By ratifying the Convention, Canada has reaffirmed its commitment to take progressive steps to improve the living conditions of Canadians with disabilities. Now is the time for action. It's time to take the practical steps necessary to implement the CRPD and to make substantial progress toward building an inclusive and accessible Canada.

We call on the Government of Canada to take the following actions in order to deliver on the intent of the CRPD, begin implementation and fulfill the obligations laid out in the CRPD.

- Develop national mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Establish a high-level federal focal point and coordination mechanism to implement the CRPD.
- Demonstrate federal policy leadership on key priorities of the disability community (see below).
- Create a parliamentary committee for input and leadership.
- Ensure an independent monitoring mechanism to measure progress and impact.
- Establish a process for Canada's first Comprehensive Report to the United Nations on progress made. This report will be submitted in 2012.

### A Robust Participation Strategy

Design a robust participation strategy to ensure that Canada meets its obligations in Article 4 to "consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations" in implementing the CRPD.

### A National Framework for Implementation

Design a National Framework for Implementation, or a National Action Plan, to ensure that Canada meets its obligations in Article 33(2) and to provide the vision and overarching framework for successful implementation of the CRPD. A detailed implementation action plan would identify necessary mechanisms for collaboration, benchmarks for monitoring and reporting, and strategies for priority areas for action the disability community has identified, including:

*Access to disability supports:* Disability supports are the foundation for meaningful citizenship and effective participation in all aspects of life. Many articles of the CRPD contain elements of disability supports.

*Poverty alleviation:* Canadians with disabilities face shameful rates of poverty. Canada must find the mechanisms and political will to address this problem.

*Labour force participation:* Canadians with disabilities are under-represented in the labour market because of inadequate

disability supports and lack of appropriate accommodations. CRPD Article 27 contains many measures that, if implemented, can change this situation.

*Accessibility and inclusion:* Accessibility, in its broadest sense, and effective participation and inclusion in society are key principles in the CRPD.

*Canada's international leadership:* Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and active involvement in CRPD-related work, Canada can demonstrate its continued commitment to being an international leader on disability.

### A Public and Transparent Review Process

The Government of Canada should establish a clear timeframe and process to review its position on Article 12 and the Optional Protocol.

As a State Party to the CRPD, Canada is obliged to take active measures for implementing the CRPD—including monitoring and reporting on those measures. CCD, CACL and our supporting partners believe the measures outlined in this letter are feasible, have practical value and are consistent with the provisions of the CRPD. They provide a starting point for establishing the fundamentals of an implementation plan and monitoring process.

Tony Dolan, CCD,  
and Bendina Miller, CACL

### JOINING THE CALL TO ACTION:

Abilities In Motion  
Ability Tax Group  
AbleLiving Services Inc.  
AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton  
AiMHi - Prince George Association for Community Living  
Alberta Association for Community Living  
Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities  
Alexander Society for Special Needs  
Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians  
Alzheimer Society of Perth County  
Anchor Industries Society  
A.P.P.A.L. (Association des personnes avec problèmes auditifs des Laurentides)  
ARCH Disability Law Centre  
Association for Community Living - Manitoba  
Autism Resource Centre  
BC Association for Community Living  
BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities  
Canadian Abilities Foundation  
Canadian AIDS Society  
Canadian Amputee Golf Association (CAGA)  
Canadian Association for Community Living  
Canadian Association of the Deaf  
Canadian Down Syndrome Society  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) - National  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - BC Chapter  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Edmonton Branch  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Hamilton Branch  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Moncton Branch  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - North Shore Branch  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Ontario Chapter  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Orillia & District Branch  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Toronto Branch

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Yellowknife Branch  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
Canadian Labour Congress  
Canadian Mental Health Association - Delta Branch  
Canadian Mental Health Association - NWT Division  
Canadian Multicultural Disability Centre Inc.  
Canadian Neuropathy Association  
Canadian Paraplegic Association  
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation  
Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba  
Cerebral Palsy Foundation (Saint John)  
Chronic Pain Association of Canada  
CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network  
Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa  
Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador  
COCQ-SIDA (Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida)  
Community Living Association Lanark County  
Community Living Elgin

Community Living Ontario  
Community Living Timmins-Integration Communautaire  
Council of Canadians with Disabilities  
Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association  
Dignitas International  
Disabled Individuals Alliance  
DisAbleD Women's Network (DAWN) - Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada  
Epilepsy Association of Calgary - Central Alberta Office  
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada  
Friedreich's Ataxia Made Easier  
Groupement des Associations de Personnes Handicapées de la Rivière-Sud de Montréal Inc. (GAPHRSM)  
HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario)  
Hope Association for Community Living - Tillicum Centre  
Independent Living Centre - London & Area  
Independent Living Resource Centre - Newfoundland  
Independent Living Resource Centre -

Winnipeg  
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)  
International Network on the Disability Creation Process (INDCP)  
Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Kinsmen Foundation of British Columbia and the Yukon  
L'Arche Canada  
L'Arche Comox Valley  
L'Arche Greater Vancouver  
L'Arche Homefires, Wolfville, N.S.  
L'Arche North Bay  
L'Arche Ottawa  
L'Arche Saskatoon  
Learning Disabilities Association of Peterborough  
Lifestyle Options Retirement Communities  
Literacy Link Eastern Ontario  
Lupus Foundation of Ontario  
Lutheran Community Care Centre of Thunder Bay  
Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities  
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada  
Muscular Dystrophy Canada

National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)  
National Network for Mental Health  
Neil Squire Society  
New Brunswick Association for Community Living  
Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living  
Nova Scotia Association for Community Living  
NWT Disabilities Council  
Opportunities for the Disabled  
Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy  
Parents for Community Living K-W Inc.  
Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities, Carleton University  
PEI Association for Community Living  
PEI Council of People with Disabilities  
People First NWT  
People First of Canada  
People First Society of Alberta and Calgary Community Living Society  
Persons United for Self-Help in Northwestern Ontario (PUSH Northwest)  
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)

Port Alberni Association for Community Living  
Positive Women's Network  
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons New Brunswick  
Prince George Brain Injured Group Society  
RDSP Resource Centre  
Reach for the Rainbow  
Regina and District Association for Community Living  
Regroupement des Usagers du Transport Adapté de Sherbrooke Métropolitain (RUTASM)  
Réseau international sur le Processus de production du handicap (RIPPH)  
Richmond Centre for Disability  
Saskatchewan Abilities Council  
Saskatchewan Association for Community Living  
PEI Council of People with Disabilities  
People First NWT  
People First of Canada  
People First Society of Alberta and Calgary Community Living Society  
Persons United for Self-Help in Northwestern Ontario (PUSH Northwest)  
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)

South Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre  
South Shore Community Service Association (Bonny Lea Farm)  
Speak-images  
Special Olympics Saskatchewan - Saskatoon  
Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Northern Alberta  
Spinal Cord Injury Treatment Centre (Northern Alberta) Society (SCITCS)  
Sturge-Weber Foundation (Canada) Inc.  
Sunrise Youth Group  
Support Services for Students with Disabilities - Yukon College  
Thalidomide Victims Association of Canada  
Valley Autism Support Team  
Vista Centre  
Voice of the Cerebral Palsied of Greater Vancouver  
Waterloo Regional Down Syndrome Society (WRDSS)  
Yellowknife Association for Community Living