

PRESS RELEASE

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For Further Information

Daniel Iga
WNUSP Board Member
+256-772-939404
igadaniel2003@yahoo.com

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities Enters into Force Today
as Twenty Countries have Ratified the Convention**

New York City, May 3, 2008 — The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry joins with the international disability rights movement in celebrating the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The Convention ensures that persons with disabilities are guaranteed our human rights on an equal basis with all other people. "This means a 180 degree shift in the way the world thinks of users and survivors of psychiatry. It means we no longer have to sacrifice our freedom when we need support. We will have the legal right to get out of institutions or stop treatment that doesn't meet our needs, to end abusive guardianship arrangements and live as free members of society," said Tina Minkowitz, co-chair of the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP).

The UN Convention obligates participating governments to change laws and ban discriminatory customs and practices. One highlight of the Convention is the right to enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others. For persons with disabilities, this means the right to make our own decisions and to be able to obtain support that we may need to make those decisions. Nothing in the Convention allows governments ever again to make decisions for us because they think they know "what is best". The Convention also protects us from discrimination and protects our right to liberty on an equal basis with others; the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; the right to live in the community; the right to health care on the basis of free and informed consent; an end to discrimination in the job market; and the participation by persons with disabilities to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention.

WNUSP was a founding member of the International Disability Caucus – a coalition of over 70 disability rights groups and human rights

advocates who drafted text, built momentum and created the political will in support of the Convention. WNUSP is following the progress on the Convention very closely as we continue our work with other disability rights groups, human rights organizations and other allies, and with governments around the world to assure widespread ratification of the Convention without any reservations, and to ensure well-planned and fully compliant implementation.

WNUSP looks forward to the day that the Convention achieves its purpose – to protect and promote the human rights and dignity of the estimated 650 million persons with disabilities around the world, a significant proportion of whom are users and survivors of psychiatry.

End

The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP)

- is an international organization of users and survivors of psychiatry
- advocates for human rights of users and survivors
- speaks internationally for users and survivors
- promotes the user/survivor movement in every nation around the globe
- links user/survivor organizations and individuals throughout the world

For more information, please visit our website at www.wnusp.net