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INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Declaration on the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its first regular session of 1979, the Economic and Social Council adopted decision 1979/24 of 9 May 1979, in which it decided to take note of the text of a Declaration on the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons, adopted by the Helen Keller World Conference on Services to Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults on 16 September 1977, and to bring it to the attention of the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session as part of the documentation submitted under the item entitled "International Year for Disabled Persons".

2. The text of the Declaration on the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons is annexed.

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* A/34/50.

ANNEX

Declaration on the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons

Article 1

Every deaf-blind person is entitled to enjoy the universal rights that are guaranteed to all people by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights provided for all disabled persons by the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons.

Article 2

Deaf-blind persons have the right to expect that their capabilities and their aspirations to lead a normal life within the community and their ability to do so shall be recognized and respected by all Governments, administrators, educational and rehabilitation personnel and the general public.

Article 3

Deaf-blind persons have the right to receive the best possible medical treatment and care for the restoration of sight and hearing and the services required to utilize remaining sight and hearing, including the provision of the most effective optical and hearing aids, speech training, when appropriate, and other forms of rehabilitation intended to secure maximum independence.

Article 4

Deaf-blind persons have the right to economic security to ensure a satisfactory standard of living and the right to secure work commensurate with their capabilities and abilities or to engage in other meaningful tasks, for which the requisite education and training shall be provided.

Article 5

Deaf-blind persons shall have the right to lead independent lives as integrated members of the family and community, including the right to live on their own or to marry and raise a family. Where a deaf-blind person lives within a family, the greatest possible support shall be provided to the whole family unit by the appropriate authorities. If institutional care is advisable, it shall be provided in such surroundings and under such conditions that it resembles normal life as closely as possible.

Article 6

Deaf-blind persons shall have the right, and at no cost, to the services of an interpreter with whom they can communicate effectively to maintain contact with others and with the environment.

Article 7

Deaf-blind persons shall have the right to current news, information, reading matter and educational material in a medium and form which they can assimilate. Technical devices that could serve to this end shall be provided and research in this area shall be encouraged.

Article 8

Deaf-blind persons shall have the right to engage in leisure-time recreational activities, which shall be provided for their benefit, and the right and opportunity to organize their own clubs or associations for self-improvement and social betterment.

Article 9

Deaf-blind persons shall have the right to be consulted on all matters of direct concern to them and to legal advice and protection against improper abridgement of their rights due to their disabilities.

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For purposes of implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Deaf-Blind Persons, the definition of deaf-blind persons is as follows:

> "Persons who have substantial visual and hearing losses such that the combination of the two causes extreme difficulty in pursuit of educational, vocational, avocational, or social skills."