

New York, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York on 13 December 2006.

The adoption of this Convention marks a historic event for people with disabilities worldwide.

The Convention has a special importance in the life of persons with disabilities, because it represents the first document, which recognizes disability as a human rights issue.

Every person should enjoy the fundamental rights; unfortunately very often this is not the reality for the people with disabilities.

People with disabilities in Albania have to cope with prejudices and discrimination in every life aspect.

It is the first time that an international instrument of this kind covers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of people with disabilities, establishing an effective framework for the protection of the rights of 650 million people with disabilities worldwide. Ratifying countries will be legally bound to treat people with disabilities as individuals enjoying the rights clearly stated in the 50 articles of the Convention covering all life aspects.

The European Disability Forum (EDF), a representative of 50 million people with disabilities in Europe, had a leading role in the negotiations and the final approval of the Convention. In addition, the process of approving this convention has introduced something new in negotiating procedures with the UN, as the NGOs for disability issues world-wide have for the first time represented an urging and promoting factor for the approval of the final text of the Convention.

Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) has from the start been involved in the movement for the development of this Convention.

As a member of EDF and DPI and as an organisation focused on the area of human rights and the protection of the rights of people with disabilities, ADRF has participated in various European seminars and forums giving concrete opinions and suggestions on the content of the draft-Convention.

ADRF through the advocacy and co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and other organisms have enabled the involvement of the Albanian government in the process of drafting the Convention and making the statement on the readiness to sign and ratify the Convention.

Signing and ratifying the Convention

The Convention will be open for signature and ratification of 192 UN country members on 30 March 2007. The Convention will enter into force, after it has been ratified by 20 countries. The States, which ratify the Convention, will be evaluated in terms of the implementation of the rights of people with disabilities. In addition, it requires that the necessary measures and legislation to ensure an effective protection of the rights of people with disabilities are approved.

At the beginning of 2007, the European Commission will submit a proposal to the Council of European Union regarding the establishment of signing and ratifying procedures accepted by member countries. The decision will be unanimous.

Disability was not considered as a priority issue until now.

From the moment of the adoption, every State has the legitimate role and the moral obligation to protect the rights of the people with disabilities.