Seventy-second session
Third Committee
Agenda item 72
Promotion and protection of human rights

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belize, Brazil, Chile,
El Salvador, Guatemala, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mauritius,
Morocco, Panama, Sri Lanka, Togo and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of):
revised draft resolution

International Day of Sign Languages

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that multilingualism, as a core value of the Organization,
contributes to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in
Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing also that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means
of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures
globally, as well as of improving the efficiency, performance and transparency of
the Organization,

Reaffirming its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of
20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and
Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and
anniversaries, particularly paragraphs 1 to 10 of the annex thereto on the agreed
criteria for the proclamation of international years, and paragraphs 13 and 14, in
which it is stated that an international day or year should not be proclaimed before
the basic arrangements for its organization and financing have been made,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,1

Recalling also the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,2 in
which it is reflected that sign languages are equal to spoken languages, and that
States parties to the Convention undertake to recognize, accept and promote the use
of sign languages,

Recalling further its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2480 B (XXIII) of
21 December 1968, 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, 47/135 of 18 December 1992

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1 See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

Affirming that ensuring and promoting the full realization of all human rights relevant to matters of language and fundamental freedoms is a critical prerequisite to the full realization of human rights for deaf people,

Aware that sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from spoken languages, alongside which they coexist, and that, when working with deaf communities, the principle of “nothing about us without us” must be considered and integrated,

Recalling that early access to sign language and services in sign language, including quality education available in sign language, is vital to the growth and development of the deaf individual and critical to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the importance of preserving sign languages as part of linguistic and cultural diversity,

1. Proclaims 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages, to be observed each year beginning in 2018, in order to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf;

2. Invites all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to observe the International Day of Sign Languages in an appropriate manner, in order to raise public awareness of sign languages;

3. Encourages Member States to take measures to raise awareness of sign languages throughout society;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system;

5. Stresses that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution regarding the International Day of Sign Languages should be met from voluntary contributions.