



*Advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities worldwide*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ratifies UN Disability Rights Convention,  
On One Year Anniversary of Historic Signing Ceremony**

*Global Disability Network urges other countries in the Arab region to follow Jordan's example*

(New York, United States, March 31, 2008): RI congratulates the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), becoming the first nation in the Arab region to do so, and further demonstrating its commitment to the human rights of persons with disabilities. Jordan was among the first countries to sign the Convention one year ago, at a historic signing ceremony at the UN Headquarters on March 30, 2007. Jordan is now the 18<sup>th</sup> State to ratify the CRPD, drawing closer to the 20 ratifications required for the treaty to become international law.

“Jordan is widely recognized as one of the leading countries to promote disability rights, not just in the Arab Region, but around the world. The Jordanian royal family has on many occasions publicly articulated the strong support for the CRPD, and we hope that Jordan’s ratification will also encourage other Arab states to ratify as well, without reservations or declarations,” said Khaled El Mohtar, RI Vice President for the Arab Region.

RI applauds the Jordanian Government for having already enacted laws and policies on disability, especially in the education and accessibility arenas. Developing new legislation will be instrumental for all countries to implement the universal human rights standard set by the Convention. To spur this process and to promote the CRPD, RI held the first-ever Arab-African Regional Conference, in October 2007 in Djerba, Tunisia. Conference participants adopted a declaration (see [http://www.riglobal.org/events/documents/RI\\_DjerbaDeclaration\\_FINAL.doc](http://www.riglobal.org/events/documents/RI_DjerbaDeclaration_FINAL.doc)), which calls for the implementation of the Convention as a partnership between governments and civil society, particularly disabled persons’ organizations.

RI’s efforts to promote the CRPD are part of RI’s Global Advocacy Campaign, which is aimed at raising awareness of disability rights as well as building capacity on the Convention in the RI network and beyond. RI continues to call on all countries to ratify the CRPD and its Optional Protocol as a matter of priority and without reservations or declarations.

The CRPD is the first human rights treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas of life, and includes specific provisions related to rehabilitation, habilitation, education, employment, health and access to information, public facilities and services. The Optional Protocol relates to how individuals or groups can seek redress for violations of the CRPD once national remedies are exhausted. To date, 126 countries have signed the Convention, 71 have signed the Optional Protocol, 18 states have ratified the treaty and 11 states have ratified the Protocol. (Attached is a current list of all signatories and states parties to the CRPD and Optional Protocol.) The Optional Protocol to the Convention will also enter into force along with the CRPD, having surpassed the 10 ratifications needed.



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For more information on the UN Convention and contact details of experts within the RI membership, please contact Tomas Lagerwall ([sg@riglobal.org](mailto:sg@riglobal.org)), RI Secretary General, or Shantha Rau ([shantha@riglobal.org](mailto:shantha@riglobal.org)), Senior Program Officer, at +1-212-420-1500. An overview of the Convention in Arabic is also attached and available on our website ([www.riglobal.org](http://www.riglobal.org))

### **About RI**

Founded in 1922, RI is a global network of organizations of persons with disabilities, government agencies, service providers, researchers and advocates promoting and implementing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. RI is currently composed of over 700 members and affiliated organizations in 96 nations, in all regions of the world.

RI works closely with other disability organizations, serving as the Secretariat and as a member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) – a network of ten global and regional democratic organizations of persons with disabilities – and the International Disability Caucus (IDC) – a loose coalition of disabled peoples' organizations and NGOs which participated in the negotiations toward the Convention. RI also maintains official relations with the United Nations and its agencies and institutions as well as with other international organizations, NGOs and universities.

For more information about RI, please visit our newly re-designed and accessible website: <http://www.riglobal.org>.