



*RI is a global network promoting and implementing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities*

---

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **RI Launches New Website to Commemorate UN E-Accessibility Day**

**(New York, 4 December 2006)** – RI is pleased to announce the launch of our re-designed and accessible website ([www.riglobal.org](http://www.riglobal.org)) to coincide with the e-accessibility theme of today's commemoration of the International Day of Disabled Persons at the United Nations. Accessibility is one of the fundamental articles in the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first UN human rights treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, scheduled for adoption by the UN General Assembly in December 2006.

This year's focus on e-accessibility recognizes that for millions of people with disabilities worldwide – including individuals who have difficulty maneuvering a mouse as well as people who are visually impaired and require special screen-reading software or large size font – the virtual online world is just as restricted as the physical world, if not more. Technological barriers exist whether the person with a disability resides in a developing or industrialized nation, thereby resulting in further economic, political and social marginalization for a significant portion of the world's population with a disability.

In keeping with today's focus on equal access to information technology and the egalitarian spirit of the World Wide Web, the new RI website is designed, and will continue to be monitored and improved, to meet the highest level of accessibility for people with disabilities. The new RI website is just one of our programs to promote accessibility on the World Wide Web and in all forms of information technology.

RI President Michael Fox of Australia said, "The RI website and E-accessibility Day should encourage entities all over the world – including universities, governments, commercial firms, and international organizations – to create mainstream accessible websites with the goal of equitable participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. The new UN Convention is a catalyst for governments and private entities worldwide to take advantage of the economic and social benefits of developing accessible information systems and websites."

The RI website also serves as a resource on the advocacy efforts and projects of RI and our global network, as well as providing the latest news relevant to the international disability community. New features of the website include sections dedicated to RI Regions and our expert Commissions (in fields such as accessibility, education, health, social inclusion, sports and employment) with the aim of promoting more collaboration among individuals and organizations committed to advancing the international rights of persons with a disability.



###

For the program of UN activities, see [www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/iddp2006prog.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/iddp2006prog.htm).

For more information, 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.

### **About RI**

Founded in 1922, RI is a global network of people with disabilities, government agencies, service providers, researchers and advocates promoting and implementing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. RI is currently composed of over 700 members and affiliated organizations in 93 nations, in all regions of the world.

RI works closely with other disability organizations, actively participating in the International Disability Alliance (IDA), a coalition of the world's largest international organizations of and for people with disabilities.

RI also maintains official relations with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labor Office (ILO), UNESCO, UNICEF, the UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe, among others.

For more information about RI, please visit: <http://www.riglobal.org>.