



July 26, 2016

Dear Members,

On behalf of your elected board, I want to thank you for your renewed trust and faith in us. We have weathered a challenging period and we are absolutely committed to living up to your expectations and to working hard to achieve improved accessibility and inclusion for hard of hearing persons worldwide.

As outlined in our action plan adopted at the IFHOH biennial meeting held 23rd of June, 2016 in Washington DC, we are advocating for qualitative, affordable hearing aids and for cellular phones with Telecoil compatibility. The goal is reflected in the Washington Declaration 2016 passed at our BGM. Please find enclosed a press release to circulate to your media.

In other goals, we intend to improve captioning/speech-to-text guidelines for its provision at United Nations and related events. We will follow-up on captioning/speech-to-text issues identified in our recent membership survey (done in conjunction with the World Federation of the Deaf).

In the last two years we have developed materials and workshops to build our capacity to use the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as an instrument to address hearing loss concerns. We will continue to resource our network of trainers and to make the CRPD a tool for change for our community, along with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We will work together with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) to address UN-system issues and we will continue our leadership role in IDA.

Our partnership with the World Health Organization continues to flourish with our recent participation in a series of consultative meetings from the 4-8th of July in Geneva on awareness raising and ear hearing care initiatives. We will continue to promote World Hearing Day of March 3 and we urge all member organizations to undertake activities on this day to increase awareness about our needs and to reduce the stigma of hearing loss and the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants.

All of our work is only possible with your efforts and support. I would also like to acknowledge the important cooperation of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People and the Asian Pacific Federation of the Hard of Hearing and Deafened. *Together we can change the world to be more inclusive and hearing accessible.*

Sincerely,

Ruth Warick, President of IFHOH
president@ifhoh.org