## 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

## Getting Ready to Ratify'

A Conference hosted jointly by Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and the Centre for Disability Law & Policy, at the National University of Ireland, Galway on preparing for Ireland’s forthcoming ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is being held today Friday 17th May 2013, 10am to 1pm at Jury’s Inn, Custom House Quay, Custom House, Dublin 1

The keynote conference address will be delivered by Prof. Theresia Degener, Professor of law and disability studies at the University of Applied Sciences in Bochum, Germany and a member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Professsor Gerard Quinn Director of the CDLP at NUI Galway said “The seminar will provide a space for the disability community to come together to discuss what can be done to ensure that Ireland not only ratifies the Convention but successfully implements it in a way that makes a difference to the lives of people with disabilities. We have a real chance not just to follow but also to lead especially on ending institutionalisation and restoring voice to people in our legal capacity laws.”

Professor Theresia Degener, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which examines State Reports on the implementation of the Convention) will be the keynote speaker at the seminar and will discuss the overall approach of the Committee which assists States with a constructive dialogue on change. She will be joined by Agnes van Wijnen, an activist from the Netherlands (one the three remaining EU countries which has signed, but not ratified the Convention) who will provide a comparative perspective on how the disability community can prepare for ratification.

Professor Theresia Degener said “As a committee member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities I am looking forward to Ireland becoming a State Party to the Convention and to leading the way for other countries in the implementation of human rights for people with disabilities. This conference will guide policy makers to keep their promises not only in terms of ratification but also in terms of the period of time prior to ratification in terms of compliance with the UNCRPD principles”.

John Dolan CEO of DFI said “In the midst of this recession and the hardship being experienced by people with disabilities around the country todays’ focus on the UN Convention helps us to rise above our immediate concerns and to focus again and what is possible. We must use the Convention as our frame from which to ask questions, to probe issues, to lobby for change, to find solutions, and to re-orient our thinking and practices away from traditional notions, and compartmentalised planning, towards solutions grounded in the reality of people’s lives.”

Professor Quinn concluded “It has been really heartening to see the response to seminar, which has been oversubscribed with over 75 people attending from around the country. I hope that the outcome of the seminar is that people are more informed and inspired about what is possible”.

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