**New Zealand DPOs Presentation notes at the UN committee on the Rights of Disabled People**

**Formal Private Briefing**

**15th September 2014**

**[Victoria]**

Madam Chair, distinguished Committee Members, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you.

I am honoured to stand before you today representing disabled persons organisations of New Zealand.

My name is Victoria Manning. I am Deaf and am speaking in New Zealand Sign Language through two NZSL interpreters.

I am speaking on behalf of a coalition of seven DPOs who prepared the New Zealand Disabled Person’s Organisations shadow report.

* We are aware that on the international stage, NZ is seen as a world leader on disability rights. We know there is much interest here, in hearing from New Zealand
* We are here today to bring you the voice of disabled New Zealanders. Disabled New Zealanders have said loudly and clearly that they do not have equal opportunities and an equitable life as non-disabled New Zealanders have.
* We are doing well in a few areas. For example, new work around the Government engaging with DPOs to develop the Disability Action Plan
* Another good area of work is that the Govt have recognised the need to invest in a awareness raising program - HOWEVER this has not been carried out in compliance with Article 4.3, and so the effectiveness of this programme is questionable.
* In 2001 NZ Disability Strategy was developed in close consultation with disabled people with actions for improving our lives. However, 13 years on, we are no better off. And, many of the action in the new Govt Action plan were in the Disability Strategy 13 years ago.
* Over the last few years, the Govt have implemented many small pilot programmes and projects. However, it is not clear what these will lead to, if anything
* We see many systemic problems in NZ, and most often these are addressed in a narrow way, with the government looking at tweaking things here and there.
* What is lacking in NZ is Govt recognition of the systemic problems and then addressing those problems in a systemic way.
* The Chch earthquakes brought building accessibility issues to the fore. Some work with disabled people has been happening in this area to improve the accessibility of our built environment. However, we are still seeing new buildings being built that are not accessible.
* In New Zealand there are over 30 central government agencies, plus we have many local authorities. How those central and local government agencies engage with disabled people and DPOs is ad hoc and inconsistent. We have some good engagement happening on one area, but this is only in one area. Government and the DPOs have developed some new principles to guide engagements between government and DPOs, however those principles are aspirational and the government has no plans for implementation and monitoring of those principles.
* Despite the Govt working with DPOs and establishing various disability advisory groups, disabled people are still not involved in the decision-making processes. As a result, many decisions are being made, eg around new public buildings and Chch re-build, that limit our participation and human rights.
* Overall, New Zealand is good at making promising aspirations but has a poor track record on implementation; making little and slow progress on work to ensure we can realise our human rights
* We have much work to do in New Zealand to ensure disabled New Zealander’s their human rights.

Thank you for this opportunity for DPOs to speak to you, and we look forward to engaging with you further.