



Ms Erna Solberg  
Prime Minister of Norway  
The Office of the Prime Minister  
PO Box 8001 dep.  
(NO-)0030 Oslo  
Norway

28<sup>th</sup> November 2013

*Dear Prime Minister,*

### **Norway's Declaration on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

I am writing on behalf of the Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC), an international human rights NGO headquartered in Budapest. On behalf of MDAC, I congratulate you on the formation of your new Government. I hope the Government maintains its leadership in promoting human rights worldwide.

In June Norway ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), becoming the 130th state to do so. The previous government entered a 'Declaration' upon ratification which fundamentally undermines the purpose of the Convention. Unfortunately, we are also concerned that the Government failed to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRPD which allows people in Norway to utilise the UN mechanism for dealing with complaints of human rights breaches if these are not remedied by the Norwegian justice system.

The Declaration is actually a Reservation, which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the CRPD. It is therefore unlawful under public international law. As such, MDAC asks you to ensure that your Government withdraws it. This is an opportunity for your Government to show that it stands fully behind social justice and equality and will ensure the continuing advancement of the human rights of all people with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities or psycho-social (mental health) disabilities.

To assist your government with the detail of this technical area of law – which has a profound effect on the human rights of thousands of people in Norway – I am pleased to attach MDAC's "Legal Opinion on Norway's Declaration/Reservation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" which makes the case for why your Government should withdraw the Declaration/Reservation.

I offer MDAC's technical advice and assistance to your Government to ensure that the international law applies to people with disabilities in Norway on an CRPD can have the maximum possible benefit for all members of Norwegian society.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Lewis  
Executive Director



Enc: Legal Opinion on Norway's Declaration/Reservation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CC: Attorney General, Norway  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway  
Permanent Representative of Norway at the United Nations, New York  
Permanent Representative of Norway at the United Nations, Geneva  
Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe