



Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA  
United Kingdom

23 January 2009

Dear Prime Minister,

**Re: UK ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

The Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) is an international human rights non-governmental organisation which works to advance the rights of children and adults with intellectual disabilities and mental health disabilities in Europe and Central Asia.

MDAC is concerned that the UK government intends to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with multiple reservations and/or interpretative statements. As outlined in the report of the House of Lords and House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights (HL Paper 9, HC 93, 4 January 2009) the reservations under consideration are in respect of immigration, education, service in the military and benefits appointees.

The importance of a UK reservation-free ratification are several. First, as the Joint Committee has emphasized, the reservations under consideration are unnecessary from the perspective of UK domestic law. Second, reservations are not permitted where they are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The UK's reservations risk breaching this rule. Third, ratification of the Convention with reservations would weaken the UK's role in the international community as a leading figure in the global protection of human rights. Many of the countries in which MDAC works look to the UK for substantive human rights leadership, and if the numerous reservations currently under consideration by the UK government are adopted, the UK would be leading the international community in the dismantling of the scope of the Convention, and subsequently, its force in promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities.

Furthermore, MDAC is concerned that the UK government is failing adequately to fully include people with disabilities and their respective organisations in discussions about the possible adoption of reservations and interpretative declarations to the Convention. Participation in disability policymaking lies at the heart of the Convention itself, both in Article 4 on principles, and Article 33 on national implementation.

MDAC requests the immediate publication of the current text of reservations and interpretative declarations under consideration by the UK government, so that consultation with and scrutiny

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**mdac** advances the human rights of children and adults with actual or perceived intellectual or psycho-social disabilities. Focusing on Europe and Central Asia, we use a combination of law and advocacy to promote equality and social integration.



by a range of stakeholder organisations is made possible. MDAC further encourages the UK Government to ratify the Convention without reservation or delay.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Oliver Lewis  
Executive Director

Copies to:

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