# **Transcript: UN General Assembly: 79th Plenary meeting, 79th session.**

# **Monday, 16 June 2025**

## **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family - Item 26(b): Draft resolution (A/79/L.92) on International Day of Deafblindness (A/79/L.92)**

*Available at:* [*https://media.un.org/avlibrary/en/asset/d341/d3412951*](https://media.un.org/avlibrary/en/asset/d341/d3412951) *(Minutes: 02:47:00 – 02:58:00)*

**Chair:** The assembly will resume its considerations of sub item B of agenda item 26 entitled social development including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, aging, persons with disabilities and the family. To take action, a draft resolution issued as document A/79/L.92. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Croatia to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.92.

**Mr. Hrvoje Ćurić Hrvatinić, DPR, Charge d’Affaires a.i. of Permanent Mission of Croatia:**

Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.92, entitled *"*The International Day of Deafblindness,"tabled under Agenda Item 26(b).

Persons with disabilities represent the world’s largest minority group—a diverse community spanning all ages, religions, continents, and backgrounds. Uniquely, it is the only minority group that any one of us may join at any time—whether through birth, illness, accident, or aging.

This resolution—co-facilitated by Antigua and Barbuda, Croatia, Djibouti, Jordan, and the United Republic of Tanzania—is the first in the history of the General Assembly to specifically address deafblindness as a unique and distinct disability.

According to estimates from two global studies conducted by the World Federation of the Deafblind, more than 16 million people live with severe deafblindness, while an additional 160 million experience milder forms. Yet, despite these numbers, deafblindness remains one of the most misunderstood and overlooked disabilities, frequently excluded from both disability-specific initiatives and broader development programs.

The resolution proposes the proclamation of a UN International Day of Deafblindness, with the aim of raising awareness of the challenges faced by persons who are deafblind and promoting their inclusion across all sectors of society—from education and employment to cultural life and policymaking. The proposed date, 27 June, commemorates the birth of Helen Keller—a renown author, educator, and one of the most iconic figures in the deafblind community.

This initiative is deeply rooted in research and advocacy of the World Federation of the Deafblind, which has demonstrated that persons with deafblindness are disproportionately affected by poverty, marginalization, and limited access to essential services and support systems. This resolution is not merely symbolic—it is a call to action. A call to ensure that persons with deafblindness are no longer left behind.

We express our sincere gratitude to all delegations for their constructive engagement and flexibility during the negotiation process. Your collaboration reflects a shared commitment to making a real and lasting impact on the lives of deafblind persons around the world. We also thank all those who have cosponsored this resolution. Each cosponsorship is not only a reflection of the strength of the text and the outreach of the core group, but also a testament to the tireless efforts of disability organizations and individuals around the globe who advocated to their governments for support.

In particular, Croatia was inspired to join this initiative thanks to the exceptional work of Dr. Sanja Tarczay—a remarkable woman with deafblindness, who happens to be Croatian, currently serving as President of the World Federation of the Deafblind and Vice President of the International Disability Alliance.

It was Dr Tarczay who first reached out to us, sharing her vision and unwavering belief that the deafblind community deserves greater global recognition. Together, we resolved to turn that vision into reality.

In conclusion, Mr. President, by supporting this resolution, we are not only acknowledging a long-overlooked community—we are taking a significant step toward building a more inclusive and equitable world for all.

Thank you.

**Chair**: I thank the distinguished representative of Croatia. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/79/L.92. For your information, the draft resolution has closed for cosponsorship. I now give the floor to the representative of the secretariat.

**Representative of Secretariat**: Mr President I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the delegations listed on the L document. The following countries have also become co-sponsors of L.92. (Proceeds to read additional cosponsors). If any other countries wish to cosponsor L.92. please signify by pressing the microphone button now. (Proceeds to read out additional cosponsors). Thank you, Mr President.

*The full list is provided below:*

***Co-sponsors*** *Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Croatia, Djibouti, Georgia, Jordan, Namibia, Qatar, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania.*

***Additional Co-sponsors*** *Albania, Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Tonga, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zimbabwe.*

**Chair**: I thank the representative of the secretariat. The assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/79/L.92 entitled International Day of Deafblindness. May I take it that the assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/79/L.92? It is so decided.

(applause)

Before giving the floor for explanations for vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations for vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. I give the floor to the United States.

**United States representative:** Thank you Chair. United States thanks Croatia for facilitating the negotiations in this resolution. It is important to recognise and address the distinct challenges faced by deafblind individuals. It’s also important to celebrate the achievements of deafblind persons. We are pleased that the international day will fall on the birthday of Helen Keller, an American author and disability rights advocate who was both deaf and blind. While we appreciate the attention drawn to the experiences of deafblind individuals, we do not want to emphasise one disability or condition over another through a proliferation of disability specific international days. The International Day of Persons with disabilities, December 3rd, encompasses all persons with disabilities. Moving forward, we hope we can celebrate the wide range of disabilities on that day.

**Chair**: I thank the United States. I give the floor to Israel.

**Israel representative:** Thank you Chair. Our delegation wishes to thank Croatia and the additional main cosponsors for submitting this draft resolution on the proclamation of 27th of June as International Day of Deafblindness which was adopted by consensus. We would like to express our support to the establishment of an international day dedicated to raise awareness to this unique and distinct disability as well as to promote inclusion of deafblind individuals in all aspects of society. IT is an opportunity for us as member states to show that we have act behind the words in our mission to leave no one behind. Unfortunately, I am delivering this explanation of position as the negotiations on this important text were incredibly misused for political purposes, diverting attention away from its core mission of advancing the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities. As such, we would like to reiterate that Israel’s position is without prejudice to our view regarding participation modalities of member states and observers of the general assembly. Thank you Chair.

**Chair**: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The assembly has thus concluding this stage of its considerations of sub item b of agenda item 26.