**Why is it called the *International Day of Deafblindness* and not the *International Day of Persons with Deafblindness* or *Deafblind Persons*?**

**UN Protocol and Nomenclature**

**When the United Nations establishes international days, it usually follows consistent naming conventions and protocols that emphasize the disability itself or symbols and communication methods associated with it—examples include *World Autism Awareness Day*, *World Down Syndrome Day*, and *International Day of Sign Languages*.**

**Since the *International Day of Persons with Disabilities* already exists to promote the rights of all persons with disabilities, introducing a separate *International Day of Deafblind Persons* would risk duplication and inconsistency with existing UN practice.**

**In contrast, *International Day of Deafblindness* draws attention to deafblindness as a distinct disability, while promoting a rights-based and inclusive approach. It shifts the focus from identity alone to the specific condition and barriers faced—particularly in communication, mobility, and access—thereby strengthening global advocacy for recognition, inclusion, and tailored services.**

**Another important consideration is the broader disability movement itself. If the day were titled the *International Day of Persons with Deafblindness*, it could raise questions among other disability groups as to why only one group of persons with disabilities receives a dedicated day beyond the already existing International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Framing the day around the condition rather than the identity helps avoid such tensions and ensures solidarity within the wider disability community.**

**Equally important is the relationship with organizations that work *for* persons with deafblindness—such as Deafblind International, Sense International, and Perkins International. These are not organizations *of* persons with deafblindness, but they play a vital role as researchers, teachers, service providers, advocates, and funders. By naming the day the *International Day of Deafblindness*, we affirm an inclusive space where both representative organizations *of* persons with deafblindness and supportive organizations *for* persons with deafblindness can stand together as allies. This approach strengthens collaboration, avoids unnecessary division, and ensures that all stakeholders remain engaged in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with deafblindness.**

**Official Legal Recognition of Deafblindness as a Distinct Disability**

**Recognition of deafblindness as a distinct disability is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring the rights, awareness, and full inclusion of persons with deafblindness. Effective advocacy begins with universal acknowledgment of deafblindness as a unique dual sensory impairment.**

**Despite progress in some regions, many countries have yet to officially recognize deafblindness as a distinct disability. This lack of recognition leads to significant gaps in legislation, service provision, data collection, etc. Even where legal recognition exists, true inclusion also depends on societal understanding of the specific realities of the deafblind community.**

**The UN’s adoption of the International Day of Deafblindness marks a significant milestone in raising global awareness of this issue. It not only urges governments to recognize deafblindness separately in laws, policies, and programs but also supports ongoing efforts to encourage the World Health Organization (WHO) to formally include deafblindness in both the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). This recognition would enable more accurate diagnoses, consistent evaluations, and the development of services tailored to the needs of persons with deafblindness.**

**Currently, individuals are often misclassified as either only deaf or only blind, leading to fragmented and inadequate support. Formal recognition—by the UN and its agencies such as WHO, and national governments—is essential to ensure access to tailored services including Deafblind interpreters/guide-interpreters, appropriate assistive technologies, and inclusive policies that address the unique and specific needs of persons with deafblindness. Without this recognition, they remain underrepresented, overlooked and systemically invisible.**

**Identity and inclusion**

**The official naming of the *International Day of Deafblindness* reflects a commitment to promoting recognition, inclusion, and awareness of deafblindness as a distinct disability. By focusing on the condition itself, rather than solely on identity, it ensures that all individuals with combined vision and hearing loss are included—regardless of whether they identify as deafblind or are formally recognized as such in official records.**

**Many individuals with combined hearing and vision loss may not identify as Deafblind for different reasons, even if they meet the medical criteria. Naming the day after the condition itself—deafblindness—promotes broader inclusion, raising awareness across the full spectrum of lived experiences.**

**This approach also acknowledges and respects the diversity of communication methods, cultural expressions, and support needs within the deafblind community. The UN’s recognition of the day honors the symbols and ethos of this community—such as the red-and-white striped cane, a global symbol of deafblindness, orientation and mobility—and affirms the shared identity, culture, and rights of persons with deafblindness.**

**To Conclude**

**The *International Day of Deafblindness* is more than a symbolic milestone—it is a powerful call to action. It reminds us that meaningful change is not only necessary but achievable. Across the world, persons with deafblindness are organizing, raising their voices, and demanding the recognition, services, and dignity they deserve.**

**This day honors the strength, unity, and resilience of the Deafblind community. By raising awareness, deepening public understanding, and advancing formal recognition at every level, we move closer to a future where every Deafblind person stands tall, unheard by none, unseen by no one, and never left behind.**