

# Media Update

23 September 2020

## United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SIGN LANGUAGES

23 September 2020

On the International Day of Sign Languages this year, we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic that has disrupted and upended lives everywhere, including the lives of the deaf community.

It has been encouraging to see some countries providing public health announcements and information on COVID-19 with national sign language interpretation. In my dedicated policy brief on a disability-inclusive response to the pandemic, I called for COVID-19 response and recovery measures to be accessible to all.

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, launched last year, aims to strengthen our efforts to ensure the meaningful participation and full inclusion of people with disabilities in all that we do, including in times of crisis. That is the only way to fulfil the central promise of the 2030 Agenda – to leave no one behind.

On this International Day of Sign Languages, I call on all local, national and global leaders to protect and promote the diversity of sign languages and cultures, so that every Deaf person can participate in and contribute to society and reach their full potential.