Report about the IDA Board Meeting- July 13-15, 2013 New York City

By Klaus Lachwitz, President of Inclusion International.

ABOUT IDA

IDA is a unique international network of global and regional organisations of persons with disabilities. It was established in 1999 and Inclusion International (II) was one of its founding members besides the World Blind Union (WBU), the World Federation of the Deaf and other well known international umbrella organisations. IDA aims to advance the human rights of persons with disabilities as a united voice representing the diversity of persons with disabilities at global level. It runs two offices, one in Geneva and another one in New York City with a small team of highly qualified human rights experts. Between 2010 and 2012 it was Chaired by Diane Richler, Inclusion International’s former President. Today IDA is a very well respected international network and it is lobbying the UN and its agencies not only with regard to the implementation of the CRPD, but also with the aim to become a key player in the UN system in all human rights matters which affect the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.

For more detailed information please check IDA`s website
http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/en

IDA BOARD MEETING- Legal incorporation and new Board members elected

The meeting took place on 13-15 July in New York City and was dominated by IDA`s decision to gain legal status as an entity under Swiss Law and to hold elections for the newly established IDA Board. As all this had to be implemented on the basis of unanimous decisions taken by IDA’s members, it took some time to negotiate and formulate IDA`s constitution and by-laws. But we succeeded and the IDA board now comprises 12 Board
members including me as President of Inclusion International. The Board will be Chaired until 2014 by Yannis Vardakastanis, president of the European Disability Forum (EDF).

Some of our members will ask the question: Why was it necessary to constitute IDA as a legal entity? It is a fair question as the legal process was tough and as IDA’s Governing Body, which was acting on the basis of unanimous decision – making since 1999, worked successfully without being legally registered. But the answer is quite a simple one: IDA does not receive any financial support by the UN States Parties. It depends on donors such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) whose funding criteria requests that IDA should be organized and run as a legally incorporated association.

IDA’s INvolvement in 2015 and Beyond

At the time being IDA is very much involved in the UNs` activities on “2015 and beyond”. The background is the following: In 2005 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which promised to halve poverty, to effectively improve health conditions in developing countries, to guarantee education for all children, to build up social protection etc. All these goals should be reached by 2015. It goes without saying that there was a lot of scepticism from the beginning whether this ambitious program could be realized and implemented within 10 years. And there was a lot of frustration within the international disability movement as the needs and living conditions of persons with disabilities were not mentioned in any of the MDGs.

In the meantime many UN States Parties have requested to prolong the MDGs “beyond 2015” and to revise and improve them. Different activities, therefore, have been started by the UN and its agencies. This time IDA with the support of its members and many national DPOs will hopefully succeed in including disability issues in the documents. They will be negotiated finally by the UN States Parties as the UN General Assembly decided to convene with Heads of States and Governments on the 23rd of Sept. 2013 for a one day High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMDD).
theme will be: “The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.”

INCLUSION INTERNATIONAL’s MEMBERSHIP TO IDA

Inclusion International benefits greatly from the work carried out by IDA. Inclusion International’s resources are limited and we rely on a very small team of Officers and staff in Canada and London to do the work. IDA work involves filtering the vast amount of information produced steadily by the different departments within the UN and its agencies such as UNESCO, WHO, ILO etc. This enables Inclusion International to identify and share with our members the information that is of utmost importance for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

On the other hand Inclusion International can send feedback on the issues that are relevant to our members so the IDA can represent their interest when lobbying the UN and its agencies.