March 18, 2020

**RIADIS PUBLIC STATEMENT**

To all Latin American Governments;

To the entire Latin American Community;

To all Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their families, and Civil society organizations

To all Persons with Disabilities.

In the face of the Sanitary crisis caused by the Coronavirus (COVID - 19) throughout the world;

Aware of the higher level of vulnerability that persons with disabilities face in this emergency situation, product of the global pandemic, since they are invisible or are not taken care of in a timely and adequate way;

Concerned about the measures that Latin American Governments have been taking to stop this pandemic situation.

The Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disability and their Families (RIADIS), declares that:

We stand in solidarity with all the people who have been affected by this pandemic;

We consider that the extreme measures adopted by Governments and National States, to stop the spread of this virus, are necessary to prevent the population security;

We are concerned about the difficulty of persons with disabilities in accessing information about these measures because its accessibility has not been considered for that it can reach in time and form all people equally, especially at persons with disabilities who live in rural areas and who do not have timely access to information or the internet;

**WE CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER:**

That the communications published by digital media for both the information such as for prevention, are made in accessible formats, easy language and easy to understand; videos with sign language and subtitles.

That it guarantees that the television media use an interpreter of sign languages ​​and subtitles and/or transcription of all communications so that information also reaches persons with hearing loss;

That in addition to the free consultation phones that are being made available by the governments, WhatsApp messaging is also made available so that hearing impaired persons can communicate through video calls with Sign Language Interpreters from their own country to answer their queries;

That Governments guarantee the provision of support services so that persons with disabilities can meet their basic needs in daily life, because self-isolation is impossible for people who need support to feeding, cleaning, dressing;

That Governments consider financial support for persons with disabilities that faced extreme situations, which puts them at risk of life and for those that, due to quarantine measures, have no chance of generating their own economic income;

That persons with disabilities are always kept in mind in all the actions taken, since it is a group at high risk of contagion, due to the vulnerability that theyexperience, and that in this situation of health crisis is much more accentuated;

Permanently consult persons with disabilities and their organizations on the measures to take to face this health crisis.

That all the actions of Latin American Governments also apply to the situation of refugees and migrants with disabilities and their families (the Venezuelan citizens and citizens of other nationalities who are in a situation of displacement in the region), and to those PEOPLE who acquire disability in the displacement process they are experiencing, with all the humanitarian risks that this reality implies. In addition, take the corresponding measures on situations of xenophobia and racism in the conditions of displacement of these migratory groups.

**We also call on persons with disabilities and their families to keep in mind the following:**

The measures adopted by governments are to protect our security and health, which is why we urge you to obey them.

That mobility tools like wheelchairs, support sticks, orientation and mobility sticks, among others, must be a permanent object of a deep cleaning, with the purpose of avoiding contagion;

That they establish contact networks with family members or support groups to receive a timely attention to their needs;

That they resort to the services of purchases through the telephone, in the countries that still are active, so that they can receive the food they need at home and thus, avoid leaving their homes so they are not exposed to contagion;

That they take into account the recommendations on the distance to be kept in conversations with other people so they are not expose to contagion.

RIADIS, as a representative organization of organizations of persons with disability and their families in Latin America, is willing to support, accompany and guide Governments on how to effectively implement the actions so that persons with disabilities also access steps being taken to curb this pandemic.

Sincerely:

The RIADIS Board of Directors