



World Blind Union  
Union Mondiale Des Aveugles  
Unión Mundial de Ciegos

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2 January 2019

## **WBU statement on the World Braille Day, 2019**

The World Blind Union is delighted to celebrate the World Braille Day, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2019, which has been declared by the United Nations as an international day to commemorate the importance of braille. On this day, the world must recognize the right of access to braille by blind people and to raise awareness on its relevance.

Braille has received recognition by the UN, especially in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): under Article 9 on accessibility which calls on states to provide signage in braille and in easy to read and understand forms in buildings and other facilities open to the public; Article 21 which requires the provision of information in accessible formats including braille and Article 24 in which states parties shall facilitate the learning of braille.

The Marrakesh Treaty is also celebrated for recognizing braille as critical in providing accessible information to visually impaired persons. The Treaty obliges all ratifying states to ensure that published works and books are produced in accessible formats including braille.

However, there are numerous challenges in the use and learning of braille:

- Braille literacy is not offered in most mainstream schools globally. There is chronic shortage of teachers qualified to teach braille across the six continents. Yet, every child who is blind has the right to be taught braille by someone who is competent in its use.
- Many countries throughout the world have not included braille in their education system.
- There are no adequate policies and legislations to guide the implementation of braille literacy.

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### **World Blind Union**

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- Braille equipment including Perkins braille machines, embossers and papers are expensive for most blind people especially in low income countries.
- Many governments do not allocate resources and budgets to promote and facilitate the use of braille.

## Call for actions

The World Blind Union is calling upon states to take the following actions:

- To recognize the World Braille Day in their national celebrations as a platform for advocacy and increased awareness.
- To fulfill obligations stipulated under the UNCRPD and the Marrakesh Treaty by putting in place administrative and legislative policy frameworks for implementation of braille literacy in their countries.
- To build the capacities of qualified teachers for promotion of braille literacy.
- States that have not ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to do so and domesticate the Treaty in their legal frameworks.
- All states should allocate budgets for braille literacy.

For more information about the UN recognition of the World Braille Day go to:

<http://www.worldblindunion.org/English/news/Pages/UN-General-Assembly-affirms-World-Braille-Day.aspx>

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The World Blind Union (WBU) is the global organization that represents the estimated 253 million people worldwide who are blind or partially sighted. Members consist of organizations of blind people advocating on their own behalf and organizations that serve the blind, in over 190 countries, as well as international organizations working in the field of vision impairment. Visit our website at [www.worldblindunion.org](http://www.worldblindunion.org)

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