



World Blind Union
Union Mondiale Des Aveugles
Unión Mundial de Ciegos

28/09/20

WBU statement on White Cane Safety Day on Thursday 15 October 2020

The World Blind Union (WBU) joins the rest of the world in observing White Cane Safety Day on Thursday 15th October 2020.

White Cane Safety Day reminds the world of the importance of the White Cane as a tool for independent living for persons who are blind and partially sighted.

As the world grapples with the impact of COVID-19, we take this opportunity to remind law and policy makers and all stakeholders involved to ensure that designing or redesigning proper infrastructure adheres to COVID-19 protocols, that universal design is considered and everyone is sensitized. It is necessary for all of us to adjust to the "new normal" and in doing so, no one must be left behind.

For example, in our [August 2020 report, AMPLIFYING VOICES: OUR LIVES, OUR Say](#), learning From Covid-19 through the experiences of blind and partially sighted persons across the world, one of the challenges highlighted by respondents is that new regulations such as queuing guidelines and distancing markers fail to take in to consideration accessibility features for persons who are blind or partially sighted. One respondent stated that "These markers are not tactile so I cannot feel them with my long cane and my dog does not know to seek these markers out".

In our quest to manage COVID-19 and its impact, states parties must not forget their obligations enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), more specifically, [Article 9](#) which requires countries to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers and ensure that persons with disabilities can access their environment, transportation, and public facilities and [Article 19](#) which states that persons with disabilities must be able to live independently, to be included in the community. In addition, [Goal 11](#) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which stresses the importance of making cities and human settlements inclusive and safe for

World Blind Union

President: [Dr. Fredric K. Schroeder](#) ● **Chief Executive Officer:** Mr. José Viera

Address: 1929 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON Canada M4G 3E8

Telephone: 1-416-486-9698 Fax: 1-416-486-8107

Email: info@wbu.ngo Website: www.worldblindunion.org

Twitter: [@BlindUnion](https://twitter.com/BlindUnion) Facebook: [@BlindUnion](https://www.facebook.com/BlindUnion)

Registered Charity No. 85547 1587 RR0001 Canada Revenue Agency - canada.ca/charities-giving

all. It is necessary that countries strive to achieve this goal as universal access will eliminate some of the challenges currently experienced by blind and partially sighted users of white canes.

As we commemorate the white cane day, it is our hope that policy makers recognize the importance of the right of blind and partially sighted persons to travel independently and safely in a universally accessible environment, and the use of the white cane, and that persons who are blind and partially sighted understand the value of having and using the white cane and keeping it sanitized for the safety of all.

More tips on orientation and mobility, personal safety in time of Covid-19 are available at WBU Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=635697946986957&extid=HbWXHJczq4BZgewi>

For further information, please contact:

Terry Mutuku
Communications and Strategic Development Officer
World Blind Union
Terry.Mutuku@wbu.ngo

World Blind Union

President: [Dr. Fredric K. Schroeder](#) ● **Chief Executive Officer:** Mr. José Viera

Address: 1929 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON Canada M4G 3E8

Telephone: 1-416-486-9698 Fax: 1-416-486-8107

Email: info@wbu.ngo Website: www.worldblindunion.org

Twitter: [@BlindUnion](https://twitter.com/BlindUnion) Facebook: [@BlindUnion](https://www.facebook.com/BlindUnion)

Registered Charity No. 85547 1587 RR0001 Canada Revenue Agency - canada.ca/charities-giving