Declaration: Inheritance, Innovation, and Sharing of Expertise in Education of the Deaf

In order to promote the development and subsequent social independence of hearing impaired children, there is a need for both effective educational principles and appropriately skilled educational staff. In this context, the themes of this Congress are particularly relevant.

Inheritance: The methods, skills and knowledge of deaf education professionals that have been accumulated through the practices of our predecessors must be passed to new generations of educators across the Asia-Pacific Region.
Innovation: New approaches are continuously required in order to take advantage of developments in the areas of information technology, hearing technology (including hearing aids and cochlear implants), and sign language linguistics.
Sharing: It is crucial that educators and related professionals in the Asia-Pacific Region should “share” their educational experience and knowledge, as developed and refined in their own countries, with those in other countries across the region, with due respect to national and cultural differences.

At the 9th Asia-Pacific Congress on Deafness held in Tokyo Japan, October 9th – 12th, 2006, we declare that the following services are crucial to the continuing advancement of opportunities and outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children.

- Early detection of hearing impairment through the provision of universal newborn hearing screening systems.
- Early educational intervention for deaf and hard of hearing children and their parents to ensure the children’s social, language and cognitive development.
- The provision of opportunities for parents to be fully involved and contributing partners in the education and development of their deaf or hard of hearing children.
- The timely provision of unbiased and accessible information to parents of deaf and hard of hearing children about the various language and communication systems, cultural and linguistic affiliations, and assistive hearing technologies to ensure that educational approaches will match the specific needs of each child.
- The provision of effective audiological service systems; including the appropriate
selection, provision and application of cochlear implants and hearing aids for deaf and hard of hearing children and adults as appropriate.

- The provision of early access to sign language and opportunities to interact with members of the local deaf community for deaf children and their families who require such access.
- The provision of effective educational programs for deaf and hard of hearing children at all grade levels to ensure that they acquire appropriate language and communication skills and are able to use those skills to access the regular educational curriculum.
- The provision of specialized educational programs for deaf and hard of hearing children with additional (multiple) disabilities to ensure their social, language and cognitive development.
- The provision of alternative educational programs and/or support services to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students can participate in higher education environments, including university programs, without barriers.
- The provision of appropriate educational and related support services to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people are able to access the widest possible range of employment and career opportunities.
- The provision of specialized university-level training for teachers who will work in schools and associated services for deaf children.
- The provision alternative language and communication systems (including sign language interpreting and services such as captioning of television broadcasts) to ensure equality of access to information by deaf and hard of hearing people.

The Asia-Pacific Congress on Deafness (APCD) seeks to provide the framework for professionals from the Asia-Pacific countries to continue to share information and expertise in the pursuit of advancement in each of these crucial service areas. The 9th APCD commends these issues to the governments of the region as requiring the highest priority in order to ensure the well-being of all their citizens.

[Signatures]