



**UNA-UK**

UN Association of the UK  
3 Whitehall Court  
London SW1A 2EL

T: +44 (0) 20 7766 3454  
F: +44 (0) 20 7930 5893  
E: [mulligan@una.org.uk](mailto:mulligan@una.org.uk)  
W: [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

Maria Miller MP  
Minister for Disabled People  
Office for Disability Issues  
Caxton House  
6-12 Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9NA

24 August 2012

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK) and our thousands of members and supporters to convey our strong support for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the eve of the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

The Paralympics are an opportunity to place disability issues on a global podium. Already, these Games – the largest ever, with 4,200 athletes from 166 countries – have done much to promote positive images of disabled people, challenge stereotypes and raise awareness of the barriers that exist in non-inclusive societies. We hope that a shift in attitudes towards disability, as well as practical support to ensure that disabled people can participate fully in all aspects of life, will be the real legacy of London 2012.

To facilitate this, we urge the government to give further thought as to how the rights contained in the UN Convention can be made a reality for the 10 million disabled people in the UK. In this regard, we look forward to the publication of the new cross-government disability strategy.

We also hope that the government will reconsider the three reservations it currently has to the Convention – on Articles 18, 24 and 27 – which we believe could be dropped or addressed through interpretive declarations, a view echoed in the UK's recent review by the UN Human Rights Council.

International treaties do not just help to protect human rights in one or two countries. They help to establish global standards and norms. The widespread use of reservations, which can exempt states from their obligations, particularly by progressive countries like the UK, only serves to undermine the hard-won codification of these fundamental freedoms. We were delighted that the UK has already dropped one reservation to the Convention, and we urge the government to continue its leadership in this area.

I would be most grateful for a response that I can share with UNA-UK's members and supporters, which indicates how seriously the government takes its responsibilities towards protecting and promoting disability rights.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Mulligan  
Executive Director, UNA-UK