**PRESS RELEASE**

**31 December 2013**

**Speedy Enactment of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill**  
  
The disability community expresses its anguish over the inordinate delay in introducing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill in Parliament.  
  
With India ratifying the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, it was expected that all the four disability specific legislations - the Mental Health Act 1987, Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992, Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 and the National Trust Act 1999 would be harmonised with the provisions of the UNCRPD.  
  
However, while the Mental Health Care Bill has been introduced in Parliament, the Bill replacing the 1995 Disability Act is yet to be introduced.  
  
Though the process of drafting the new law started over four years back and has gone through various stages, the delay in introducing this legislation is inexplicable. More than a year has passed since the new draft of the proposed Bill was uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in September 2012.  
  
**The Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment had given an assurance that the Bill would be introduced in the Winter Session of Parliament. The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the Draft Bill on 12th December, 2013. However, the abrupt end of the Parliament session on 18th December prevented the Bill from being tabled.**

The disability sector urgently calls for the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha to enact this extremely important piece of legislation when the Parliament session is convened to pass the Vote on Account in January or February.

Members of the disability community are approaching all major political parties to garner support for this non-partisan and non-political cause that cannot but have the support of all.

As a mark of protest and to exert necessary pressure on the political leadership, while the entire world would be celebrating New Year’s eve, disability rights activists will hold Candle Light Vigils in various parts of the country on 31st December 2013  
  
The Vigil in ­Bangalore will be held \_\_\_\_\_\_. The Vigil will start at \_\_\_\_ pm.

Following this, over the next ten days, representatives of the disability groups will be meeting all MPs from Bangalore to impress upon them the need to urge the Parliament to table and pass this Bill in the next session.