Our Challenge – Article 12: The Centrepiece of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Robert Martin MNZM 2016

People First New Zealand Inc.  - Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi

**Voiceover:**

Our Challenge – Article 12: The Centrepiece of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Conversation: Supported Decision Making Hui.

**Robert:**

Tēnā tatou katoa

**Voiceover:**

Robert Martin MNZM

* Life Member of People First New Zealand Incorporated – Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi
* New Zealand’s nomination to the Committee for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
* International leader and role model for people with a learning disability
* Sought after speaker and advisor on self-advocacy
* Past Chairperson of Frozen Funds Charitable Trust
* Evaluator of Disability Support Services
* Subject of a recent book called *Becoming a Person*

**Robert:**

I am so pleased Auckland Disability Law are hosting this two-day Hui with the support of the Office for Disability Issues, DPOs, and other disability organisations.

It is great that so many people want to talk, share and learn from each other about a topic I feel is very important – Supported Decision Making.

I am sorry I can’t be with you over the next two days. Article 12 “Supported Decision Making” is a subject that is important to many of us with a learning disability and to other disabled people too.

I was privileged to be part of the writing of the Convention and we thought and fought for our friends who find communication very hard.

We wanted to make sure that all disabled people had the right to be part of all the decisions in their lives.

Article 12 has been called the centrepiece of the Convention. This is because we felt if you did not have the right in Article 12, you would not have any of the rights in the Convention.

It is disappointing that some countries have this Article exempt from their ratification. I’m pleased New Zealand has not done this.

We know right now that no country in the world has put Article 12 in place totally, but there are many trying. I think there needs to be a complete mind-shift – a move away from people making decisions for us, to making sure that we are included.

The Committee for the Convention have put out a comment which says practices of substituted decision making must be abolished.

We need to get to know people and how best they can be involved in the decisions that affect them.

In these modern times of computers, tablets and other forms of technology there are many ways that people can communicate what they want. Don’t forget we have things like photos, pictures and, of course, New Zealand’s 3rd official language – sign language.

We need to make sure people have the right information at the right time and the time and support to understand it.

I feel that it is an injustice to my friends not to be part of the decision-making process and I’m going to continue to speak up about Supported Decision Making until I know that all disabled people are getting this right and I hope you will too.

All the best for the next two days.

Kia Kaha – be strong

**Voiceover:**

Auckland Disability Law would like to thank;

* Robert Martin and Cindy Johns;
* Our lead partner, the Office for Disability Issues;
* Our partners The Human Rights Commission, Te Roopu Taurima and People First New Zealand Inc. – Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi;

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**Robert:**

Tēnā koutou

Tēnā koutou

Tēnā koutou katoa