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21st International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (ICED 2010) meeting in Vancouver, BC addresses issues of the 1880 Milan Congress

At the opening of the ICED 2010 Congress, July 19th, organizers addressed the Deaf Community's concerns regarding the Milan resolutions of 1880, which banned sign language in educational programs for deaf children.

"Partners in Education', the theme of ICED 2010, emphasizes the importance of working together," said Claire Anderson, Congress Chair. It is with respectful partnerships of educators, parents, students, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities that we will maximize the opportunities for meeting the educational needs of our students.

To this end, the Vancouver ICED 2010 Organizing Committee and the British Columbia Deaf Community worked together to develop a statement, which addressed the issues concerning Milan.

This statement "A New Era: Deaf Participation and Collaboration" was introduced to Congress participants as the beginning of a dialogue to promote healing and set the path for future collaboration.

The statement:

- Rejected all resolutions passed at the Milan Congress that denied the inclusion of sign language in educational programs for Deaf students
- Acknowledged with regret the detrimental effects of the Milan Congress, and
- Called upon all Nations to ensure that educational programs for the Deaf accept and respect all languages and all forms of communication.

The audience, both deaf and hearing, spontaneously responded with an outpouring of emotion and a standing ovation. "History has been made today and the words of the Vancouver Statement can replace the hurt caused by the Milan decision," said Joe McLaughlin, sub-committee chair, in his closing remarks.

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