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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Canadian Down Syndrome Society to present at the United Nations on World Down Syndrome Day

CALGARY, Alta. – The Canadian Down Syndrome Society is proud to announce that Kirk Crowther, National Executive Director, and Matthew MacNeil, Chair of CDSS's self-advocate steering committee VATTA (Voices at the Table for Advocacy), will be presenting about Canada's advocacy successes at the United Nations on World Down Syndrome Day.

"There are 45,000 Canadians with Down syndrome, all of whom are contributing to their communities in their own way," Kirk said. "I'm excited to join Matthew at the United Nations, to share their stories on the world stage."

Kirk and Matthew will be presenting with delegates from the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Brazil, Japan, and other countries. They will also be meeting with the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations.

This year's WSDS Conference theme, #MyVoiceMyCommunity, is about enabling people with Down syndrome to speak up, be heard and influence government policy and action, to be fully included in the community. As National Executive Director of CDSS for seven years and part of the CDSS staff for thirteen, Kirk has seen the direct positive impact that self-advocacy has not only on people with Down syndrome, but on society as a whole.

"I helped begin VATTA in 2005, with the belief that having adults with Down syndrome play a major role in the Canadian Down Syndrome Society would be beneficial to all Canadians with Down syndrome. But now, twelve years later, presenting with VATTA at the United Nations is just further proof that something like VATTA is beneficial for the entire world."

The World Down Syndrome Day Conference is sponsored by the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Canada, Australia, Brazil, India, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Poland and United Kingdom.

World Down Syndrome Day will allow people around the globe to create a single voice for advocating for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with Down syndrome. It occurs annually on March 21 and is officially ratified by the United Nations. More information about World Down Syndrome Day is available at www.cdss.ca.

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About Canadian Down Syndrome Society:

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is a vital resource linking individuals, parents and professionals through advocacy, education, and providing information. CDSS is proud to be the voice of Canadians with Down syndrome and their families. CDSS wants all Canadians to 'See the Ability'. Visit www.cdss.ca for more information.

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