UNGA Resolution on PLWRD & their families: Understanding the process

The UN General Assembly assembles 193 nation-states. It is ‘in session’ for the entire year, starting in September.

UNGA Resolutions reflect the degree of intergovernmental agreement, the evolution of political ideas and the state of global cooperation on a given topic.

The UNGA works through Six Main Committees which carry out most of their work from September to December.

The UNGA Resolution on “Addressing the Challenges of Persons Living with a Rare Disease and their Families” (Resolution on PLWRD) will be presented through the Third Committee.

All Member States have a UN Permanent Mission – a sort of ‘embassy’ – to represent their interests at the UNGA in New York.

In the Third Committee, each Member State is represented by one or more diplomats – also referred to as ‘experts’ or ‘counsellors’ – from the UN Permanent mission.

These Third Committee counsellors work together to develop and adopt resolutions. They meet in October and November to adopt them as drafts and recommend them to the UNGA Plenary.

The Plenary then meets, usually in mid-December, to consider these recommendations and adopt the resolutions, at which point they become UNGA resolutions.

The Resolution on PLWRD is going to be officially introduced in the agenda of the Third Committee by the counsellors from the Permanent Missions of Brazil, Qatar and Spain in 2021.

They will negotiate its content with Third Committee counsellors from other Member States. Each one will liaise with their national government to get approval on whether to support the adoption of the resolution or not.

They will liaise with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as it is the one setting their mandate. But this Ministry may in turn ask for the opinion of the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Getting the support of the Ministries at national level is therefore key in the process, and we need your help!

Visit rarediseasesinternational.org/resolution4rare to find out how you can support.