

Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability ([DCAD](#)) Meeting

Wednesday 20 December 2017

at the twelfth annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Geneva

(Video archive and caption transcript are available at:

<https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2017-day-3-room-xxiii-dc-on-accessibility-and-disability>)

Chairman of this DCAD meeting: Ms **Andrea Saks**, DCAD Coordinator and Chairman of the ITU Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors ([JCA-AHF](#)), USA

Remote moderator of this DCAD meeting: Ms **Judith Hellerstein**, Hellerstein & Associates, USA

Report

1. Opening remarks and introduction to DCAD

Ms Saks welcomed the participants to the DCAD face-to-face session.

2. Review the Accessibility of IGF2017

2.1. Remote participation experience (tool itself and lack of time for testing before DCAD workshop)

- Experience with Webex

The Chairman first stressed the need to improve the accessibility of remote participation, as WebEx is not accessible for persons who are blind and those who rely on screen readers. This caused the withdrawal of Mr Gerry Ellis as a DCAD workshop (WS54 [Universal Design and Creating an Accessible Global Digital Future](#)) remote panelist, after test sessions in advance offered by IGF Secretariat. This accessibility problem has been mentioned repeatedly at previous IGF and MAG meetings.

A participant from Bangladesh, who was vision impaired, seconded the Chairman's statement that WebEx was inaccessible for persons who are blind, and highlighted the need to identify a solution so that persons who are blind can actively participate independently without any others' help.

Mr Muhammad Shabbir, Member Board of Directors, ISOC Islamabad Chapter, also supported these statements and suggested to change the tool to Zoom which was more accessible for him.

Mr Glen McKnight from Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities in Canada explained his work with Ms Hellerstein on an analysis of different conferencing tools, and that Zoom has been high on the list as being very accessible. Ms Hellerstein also confirmed that the use of Zoom in ISOC meetings that she chaired greatly increased active and independent participation of persons who were blind and using screen readers.

The chairman informed that ITU staff was testing Zoom and would share the results with DCAD and the IGF secretariat. She mentioned that IGF uses Webex as a license was offered by Cisco, but a license of Zoom may also be offered (need to be discussed further). She also stated that there are different

participation tools that allow different access features and had pros and cons regarding accessibility. For example, at ITU meetings, participants can be manually called by ordinary phone to be able to participate in standards meetings as an option of remote participation. This issue will be further discussed via email and conference call.

- Time to test remote participation before an IGF session

The Chairman also highlighted that there was no advance test time at the aforementioned DCAD workshop to make sure the session was accessible for remote participants with disabilities. This advance test time was requested by DCAD when the IGF sessions scheduling was being done, however, a previous session (IGF-SA Annual General Assembly held during the lunch break) was inserted and lasted until just before the DCAD workshop. This previous session had been recently added to the lunch break slot without DCAD knowledge since DCAD had reviewed the schedule at the end of September 2017.

DCAD has been repeatedly asking for enough advance time before its workshop, as there were remote participants with disabilities who need time to connect and test before the session. This request has been repeatedly overlooked unfortunately.

2.2. Other facilities (registration process including online and onsite, physical accessibility of the venue, accessibility of information, etc.)

- Two displays at meeting rooms: one for captioning and another for meeting documents

The Chairman reminded of the need of two visual displays for accessible meetings, and this means all meetings not just “accessibility meetings”. Persons with disabilities have varied interests just like everyone else and want to attend other meetings at IGF not just “accessibility meetings”. There should be one visual display for Captioning and another for the meeting documents. These should also be accessible for remote participants. This is helpful not only for persons with disabilities especially those with hearing difficulties, but also for everyone to easily follow the session both in the room and remotely. The room assigned for this DCAD session (Room 23) did not have an additional display, therefore caption stream was displayed in a small window. In addition, this single screen was not able to be shared with the remote participants. Though DCAD has been promised the best technical room at previous meetings this was not honoured in IGF 2017 Geneva.

- Inaccessibility of the front gate at the UN

The Chairman explained her experiences of inaccessibility of at the front gate at the UN by a car for a person with disability. There were not any procedures in place for those with physical disabilities or explanations on the website on how to proceed from the UN main gate registration point to the building below. It was clear that there were not any. Persons with temporary disabilities are not going to know what to do even if it says on the IGF registration site to tell IGF in advance if further assistance is needed. It is pointless at just the registration point if someone has foot surgery after the registration has been done.

This notification must be reviewed, and additional information needs to be posted on what obstacles to expect and then a second notice for assistance requests. There was nothing in place about the UN gate for a person with recent foot surgery. A wheel chair user might be able to get assistance at the UNOG registration point to get to the buildings downhill, but it may be difficult to return uphill for getting out.

Special arrangements must be made for a registered taxi to have a pass to enter the main gates of the UN to give people lifts down to the UN buildings at the UN gates in advance. Fortunately, by word of

mouth the Chairman took on the job to arrange for all persons who would need further transportation into the UN grounds.

There were no plans in place for that since ordinary cars were not allowed. The Chairman was the focal point for departure with the designated taxi. Due to this job, the Chairman could not attend all the sessions that she should have.

- Resources which can be referred

It is necessary to change dramatically how we approach and prepare in advance meeting for all persons with disabilities both on site and remotely so that **All** can participate both remotely and onsite. ITU technical papers on remote participation and accessible meetings below can be taken into account:

- [FSTP-ACC-RemPart](#) "Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all" (10/2015)
- [FSTP-AM](#) "Guidelines for accessible meetings" (10/2015)

- Suggested future action

DCAD to submit a formal input to IGF including aforementioned accessibility problems by 11 February 2018.

3. Future DCAD activities

- Collaboration with other DCs

Mr Shadi Abou-Zahra, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) suggested more collaboration with other Dynamic Coalitions, for example, DC on Internet of Things. As accessibility is a cross-cutting issue, and that DCs' activities are becoming mature, it would be a good time to think how to influence other Dynamic Coalitions. He suggested DCAD members to comment/suggest on other DCs' reports, to address how they could better address accessibility.

Ms Gunela Astbrink, Women with Disabilities Australia, supported this statement, and she suggested to make use of the workshop on WS145 "[The Internet of Things and accessibility for people with disability](#)" (WS 145, she organized) as a basis for one way to move forward, collaborating with DC on IoT.

Accessibility problems caused by proprietary solutions were also discussed among meeting participants. It is not simple to make accessibility features to be included in proprietary tools. Open source and standardized solutions will help create open market, interoperability, and more affordable to the users. This issue can be brought to other DCs from DCAD.

These suggestions will be further discussed via email and during DCAD calls.

- Clearing house of accessibility information

Ms Saks agreed that DCAD works on accessibility information exchange, via email and website, as suggested by Ms Deirdre Williams.

4. Other comments

Mr Jose Maria Diaz Batanero from ITU commented about the fact that ITU supports DCAD from its establishment and emphasized importance of one of the DCAD's activities that participants share their view based on their accessibility experience so to avoid duplicated problems elsewhere. At ITU, continuous efforts are being made to make ITU meetings accessible as much as possible within the

resources, and to contribute to improve ICT accessibility by coordinating, promoting and developing international standards.

The Chairman also made an intervention at the last main session on the last day highlighting this and other problems impacting persons with disabilities including recognizing that illiteracy was also a disability because whether the person affected had a recognized cognitive disability or simply had not received education was not the determining factor.

5. Closing remarks

The coordinator/Chair of DCAD thanked everyone for their comments and participation, and suggested to continue to discuss via email and conference call. Information on next DCAD captioned conference call will be communicated by email.
