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## 1 Introduction

The Internet Government Forum's (IGF) **Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)** would like to provide the following guidelines to the IGF Secretariat on how to improve accessibility at IGF meetings and to eliminate barriers. The intention is to help the IGF Secretariat to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities and to include persons with age-related disabilities during IGF meetings. This requires the staff of IGF to understand certain procedures and to include those requirements as mandatory in all host agreements.

## 2 Accessibility considerations when organizing IGF meetings:

### 2.1 Be aware of attendees' needs and requirements

- **There should be a space on the online registration form to record if a person has any access requirements or specific needs. Contact details of an accessibility focal point should be clearly displayed on the form. The registration form should be in an accessible format.**
- The registration form will be useful for planning the meeting and knowing who is attending so that security personnel and other staff can plan accordingly. Also, there should be a question asking if the participant requires a reasonable accommodation<sup>1</sup> to access the event and have a process in place for the participant to communicate directly with the accessibility focal point. In this way, organizers can anticipate the need for CART (Real Time Captioning), sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices (ALDs), alternate print formats, etc. Please see [ANNEX 1](#) for an example of the registration form. CART (Real Time Captioning) transcription provides a record of the meeting which is useful both for persons with hearing-related disabilities and for persons with visual disabilities who can later hear when the text is transcribed into DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) format. It is also useful for those whose mother tongue is not the language of the meetings in question.

### 2.2 Choose an accessible environment for the meeting

#### 2.2.1 Meeting Location

- **Determine whether the location of the meeting is accessible for persons with disabilities before booking the event.** This includes taking into account the building, city, and surroundings, and determining whether there are enough accessible solutions for accommodation, dining, and transportation in the area where the meeting will be organized. The appropriateness of the location can be easily determined by investigating if other successful accessible meetings were previously held there. All facility entrances should be accessible for wheelchairs and/or motorized scooters and have steps that are visually marked for those with sight difficulties. Never use a building with stairs where there are no public lifts or elevators for access. Lifts or elevators should have no barriers to access (i.e., stairs). All public lifts or elevators should have Braille indication of the floors

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2 (Definitions)

and, if possible, there should be audio-floor indicators or audio description so that persons who are visually impaired will know which floor they are on. All lifts should be clearly sign-posted for everyone, as well.

### 2.2.2 Meeting Venue

- **Choose the right venue:** It is essential that persons with disabilities can move around freely without needing to be escorted through security checkpoints, unless requested, or without needing to wait for an elevator key. If the door or entrance is not automatic or if it is difficult to open, then a staff member should be placed to assist. This applies to moving between meeting rooms, exhibition and dining venues, as well as to the toilets. Accessible toilets should be clearly marked (in Braille also) and on the same floor as the meeting rooms. If facilities are all on different levels, it makes it especially difficult for persons with disabilities – in particular those using a wheelchair or the visually impaired – to get from one place to another. If guide or service animals are used, then there should be a designated outdoor area available nearby to walk and water them, with disposal areas for waste. All conference information should be readily available and there should be an “accessibility desk” manned by trained staff. Other features that should be considered or made more accessible include: parking and drop-off areas; proximity to public transport; security personnel should be trained to work with the local police; and under no circumstance should access entrances be blocked, especially if there is only one accessible entrance. Training should be provided to all security personnel and especially those who man the lobby entrances.

### 2.2.3 Meeting Rooms

- **Choose accessible meeting rooms:** The plenary and workshop rooms must have accessible entrances with free and unblocked aisles so persons using wheelchairs can easily pass. There should be reserved seating spaces for persons who use wheelchairs and/or motorized scooters or who are accompanied by guide or service animals. Seating also needs to be reserved for persons with disabilities to be near captioning and/or sign language interpreters. Sign language interpreters should be well lit and clearly visible, preferably positioned on the main stage. There should be two screens, on either side of the stage, one for captioning and one for slide and video presentations. If the room is large, a second set of screens will be necessary, so that not only persons with disabilities but also persons with age-related disabilities can see the material at a distance. Likewise, there should always be two screens facing the presenters on stage or in the meeting rooms, one for captioning and the other for presentations materials, so that persons with disabilities and other presenters can see all the presentations. Stages, door entry systems, stands, and podiums need to be accessible for persons using wheelchairs as well (i.e., meeting spaces should be equipped with ramps). The inclination of ramps must not exceed 8-10% to enable access and to avoid hazardous situations. There should also be enough quality lighting for the visually impaired. Also, there should be enough time given between sessions for people to move between meeting rooms, especially when there are several floors involved. Staging according to specific needs is important (i.e., moving a podium out of the way for a speaker using a wheelchair).

#### 2.2.4 Technical Accessibility

- **Technical Accessibility:** All technical aspects of making a meeting accessible, including remote participation, need to be tested in advance. The microphones should be hand-held in most circumstances; however, in the case of a person who cannot use his/her arms or hands, there should be provisions made for either a microphone that can be attached to the speaker (such as a lavalier/pin lapel microphone) or a staff member who facilitates – the former should always being preferred over the latter. Hand-held separate microphones are needed for sign language interpreters to voice the signs of persons with disabilities into speech. Special provisions should be made for persons with disabilities who cannot access the remote participation tools. For example, persons who are blind cannot access the remote participation tools presently used by IGF. The reason is that they will most likely use a screen reader that requires another audio stream. This causes participants to switch back and forth from the audio of the meeting to the audio of the screen reader when they navigate the webpage. They often cannot find how to dial-in or are not able to use the “raise hand” tool using the screen reader without disconnecting from the meeting. Until the designers of remote participation tools solve these problems, it is required that IGF audio-visual staff arranges special call-in facilities and all volunteers are also trained to know about these procedures.

#### 2.2.5 Background Noise

- **No background noise:** It should be checked that there is no background noise, such as noisy heating, cooling, and ventilation systems or background music.

#### 2.2.6 Other Facilities

- **Ensure whether other facilities are accessible:** All luncheon, dinner and reception venues should be easily accessible to wheelchairs. There should be reserved seating with appropriate table height for wheelchair users for both meals and coffee/tea breaks. All condiments should be placed at accessible height. Also, trained staff should be provided to help persons with disabilities obtain meals in buffet situations. Moreover, there should be provisions for an alternate menu for persons with food allergies and dietary restrictions, as well as a dedicated section of the registration form addressing any such restrictions or sensitivities.

#### 2.2.7 Clear Signage

- **Provide clear signs:** Internally and externally, to all entrances, rooms, lifts, toilets, cafes and other facilities, including temporary signs giving directions and identifying meeting or event areas.
- **Arrange fully accessible and clearly signed emergency exits and evacuation procedures:** This will help persons with disabilities to exit the venue in case of emergency, including alternative procedures where lifts or elevators may not be operational.

### 2.3 Provide information about the event, building and other facilities

### 2.3.1 Venue Accessibility

- **Provide information on the accessibility of the venue:** For example, a map can be provided with a description of how to move around between the meeting rooms and other facilities, or about the availability of accessible toilets. Today, technology allows for mapping on mobile platforms as well, which can provide expanded tools and resources for improving accessibility and should be used whenever possible in addition to other accessible formats.

### 2.3.2 Accommodation

- **Provide information on reasonably priced accessible hotel accommodation in advance:** An adequate contingency of accessible rooms should be blocked for attendees who need them in order to avoid these to be given away to other guests. In addition, hotels with accessible rooms should be conveniently located nearby the conference site. This information should be explicitly mentioned on the IGF website and the accessibility focal point should be aware of these rooms and be able to assist persons with disabilities on request. When IGF staff or the host country negotiates the allocation of accessible rooms, availability needs should be discussed with the hotels and updated frequently.

### 2.3.3 Meeting Dates

- **Confirm the dates of the conference or session as soon as possible:** It is more difficult for persons with disabilities to make travel arrangements on short notice. Therefore, the conference or session dates should be announced as soon as possible.

## 2.4 Provide accessible information

### 2.4.1 Meeting Materials

- **Ensure that the informational material is accessible:** All information required for the meeting or event should be prepared in alternative formats in sufficient time for it to be distributed to participants, in their preferred format, at least 10 days before the meeting or event but preferably two weeks in advance. If documents are available on USB flash drive in accessible format or posted on an accessible website, then a person using a screen reader or a refreshable Braille display can access the documents on his/her laptop. It is suggested that there be an option and a procedure in place for a person to request information in accessible electronic formats in advance since many tablets do not have standardized access to USB ports. It is also suggested to put an open source screen reader feature on the website to help persons who do not have a screen reader or refreshable Braille display. It should be noted that documents frequently need to be appropriately reformatted prior to the use of a Braille printer.

### 2.4.2 Meeting Presentations

- **Make presentations accessible:** Check that any presentations and paperwork produced by visiting presenters will be available in accessible formats to be distributed before the meeting or event. Presenters are responsible for the accessibility of their presentations, demos and videos and of any material for distribution. Where diagrams or visual images

are used at a meeting, they should be described to participants verbally. Speakers should avoid using abbreviations, jargon, technical or specialist terms without explanation during their presentations to ensure that these terms are clearly explained during the presentation, otherwise they may not be understood by participants. Speakers and participants asking questions need to identify themselves each time they take the floor so that the captioners can recognize them. It is essential to avoid having two persons speak at the same time.

### 2.4.3 Videos

- **Make videos accessible:** It is imperative that all videos projected at the conference include open captions to allow attendees with hearing disabilities and non-native speakers to understand the content.

### 2.4.4 Website

- **Make sure that the website is accessible:** The website including the available documents (i.e., the registration form) should be accessible and labeled or formatted according to the W3C standards. Also, the conference webcast proceedings should be made accessible when posting them on the web, and include captioning.

### 2.4.5 Sign Language

- **Provide sign language interpretation, when attendees require it, in the language of the participant:** It is recommended to reserve and book sign language interpreters as early as possible as there is a shortage of qualified sign language interpreters. International sign language does not exist per se, but deaf individuals, who use different sign languages, adapt their signing to communicate with each other to make themselves understood using international signs. It is called "International Sign." The vocabulary of International Sign is smaller and not well understood globally as it is not uniform and varies from country to country. Whenever possible, book the specific sign language requested by the participant. Every country has its own sign language and varying dialects, just like spoken languages. Do not use International Sign as a substitute for the appropriate language-specific sign language requested, but use it in addition to it, unless the specific sign language interpreters are not available. There needs always to be two sign language interpreters per sign language so each interpreter can take alternate breaks. There should be an appropriate number of interpreters in order to ensure a good functioning of the proceedings.

### 2.4.6 Aids to Listening

- **Ensure that listening devices are accessible:** Enable the listening devices to plug in neck loops, as well as headphones, in order to allow persons with hearing difficulties to follow the discussions in the meeting rooms.

## 2.5 Train and inform assistance staff

### 2.5.1 Staff and Volunteer Training

- **Train assistance staff:** An “accessibility desk” must be in operation and staffed by personnel supporting the conference organization (i.e., registration, etc.). Staff must be trained to handle challenging situations for persons with disabilities. Also, staff or volunteers should be available to direct people to the relevant parts of the venue. Organizers should also check that support staff, including reception, catering and security personnel, are briefed or aware of good practice, especially when using another organization’s venue, such as hotels and conference venues. Staff should be clearly identifiable and not rely only on their conference badge.

### 2.5.2 Registration Process

- **Make registration process accessible:** All reception areas and procedures at meetings and events should be accessible for persons with disabilities. Also, persons with disabilities should be given priority registration. Persons with disabilities should be fast-tracked onsite with clear signage on where they are to go to register. All staff should be made aware to look for persons with disabilities and guide them to the appropriate locations for registration. Online registration should be accessible (see [ANNEX 1](#) for sample registration form).

## 2.6 Allow anyone to provide feedback and comment

### 2.6.1 Encourage Feedback

- **Feedback** by participants is encouraged and should be used as part of the learning process and a procedure should be established by the organizers to allow this.

## 2.7 DCAD Involvement

- For the convenience of the meeting organizers, DCAD provides in [ANNEX 2](#) a sample checklist for the day of the event, to make sure that all preparations have been implemented according to these guidelines. DCAD believes very strongly that it should be involved in the planning of future IGF meetings directly with both the IGF Secretariat and the next host country. Also, DCAD should be consulted on the next negotiation and test any new remote participation tool. DCAD is also willing to assist in accessibility awareness training in all areas of conference planning.



## ANNEX 1 – Sample Registration Form

This annex provides an example of what could be added to a conference registration form:

- If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate here.
- If you have a service animal, please indicate here.
- Other

If you require disability accommodation, please select the accommodation needed below:

- Need Sign Language Interpreter: [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_] - [if Yes, which language? \_\_\_\_\_]
- Need CART (Real Time Captioning) [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_]
- Need Braille printouts of conference information in advance: [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_]
- Need documents on USB flash drive: [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_]
- Need wheelchair access: [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_] *(Not needed on form if you have selected a venue that is accessible and if the airport shuttles are accessible. However, information on accessible transportation and services needs to be provided, e.g. accessible taxis, shuttle services, or public transportation, including railway).*
- An assistant will be accompanying me: [Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_]
- Other requests or for further information: please contact the IGF accessibility focal point or the host country accessibility focal point (email address).

## **ANNEX 2 – Checklist**

### **Verification list for the meeting day:**

1. Before the meeting or event, check for internal signage and directions.
2. Before the meeting or event, check room layouts and registration arrangements.
3. Before the meeting or event, check that all equipment works, including induction loops. A checklist should be provided by the organizers.
4. Provide communication guidelines for facilitators and participants.
5. Provide information on emergency exits, toilets and double-check that the signage is clearly visible.
6. Agree on ground rules regarding accessibility and reasonable accommodation. These rules should be agreed and posted publicly beforehand.
7. Verify the accessibility of presentations by requesting that all organizers of workshops check this aspect.
8. Allow for accessible feedback and decision-making processes and provide an accessible mechanism to do so.
9. Ensure all staff and security personnel are briefed on the services required by possible attendees and provide any accessibility awareness training.

## ANNEX 3 – References

For information, DCAD provides this annex with links to online resources for planning accessible meetings:

- [ITU tutorial on accessibility](http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/accessibility/tutorial/index.html),  
<http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/accessibility/tutorial/index.html>
- [Online webcast of the tutorial “Making ITU Accessible: Web Design, Web Conferencing and Real Time Web Captioning,”](http://www.itu.int/ibs/ITU-T/200804tutorial/index.html) <http://www.itu.int/ibs/ITU-T/200804tutorial/index.html>
- [Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings and Conferences, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat](http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/Library/Detail/catalog6998) (French/English), <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/Library/Detail/catalog6998>
- [Planning for accessible meetings, Disabled Women's Network in Ontario](http://dawn.thot.net/accessible_meetings.html),  
[http://dawn.thot.net/accessible\\_meetings.html](http://dawn.thot.net/accessible_meetings.html)
- [Access Checklist, Disabled Women's Network in Ontario](http://dawn.thot.net/access_checklist_full.html),  
[http://dawn.thot.net/access\\_checklist\\_full.html](http://dawn.thot.net/access_checklist_full.html) (French/English)
- [Planning Accessible Conferences and Meetings, State of Michigan](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Planning_Accessible_Conferences_and_Meetings_59735_7.doc), online at:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Planning Accessible Conferences and Meetings 59735\\_7.doc](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Planning_Accessible_Conferences_and_Meetings_59735_7.doc)
- [Meeting information and communications technology access and service needs for people with disabilities, background paper](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/study_groups/SGP_2006-2010/events/2007/Workshops/documents/05-successpolicies.pdf), [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/study\\_groups/SGP\\_2006-2010/events/2007/Workshops/documents/05-successpolicies.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/study_groups/SGP_2006-2010/events/2007/Workshops/documents/05-successpolicies.pdf)
- [Guidelines for Accessible Meetings and Events: Disabled People’s Network Steering Group Community Network for Manchester, April 2005](https://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDEQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mdpag.org.uk%2Fguidelines-Sept2006-1.doc&ei=OwviU5XrA8Sm0AXU0oG4Aw&usg=AFQjCNH-pH7MnefxdkjSP_Xrgf38pvE-AA&sig2=htHP1uFGE-m-AbzJB1Q2Jfg&bvm=bv.72197243,d.d2k),  
[https://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDEQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mdpag.org.uk%2Fguidelines-Sept2006-1.doc&ei=OwviU5XrA8Sm0AXU0oG4Aw&usg=AFQjCNH-pH7MnefxdkjSP\\_Xrgf38pvE-AA&sig2=htHP1uFGE-m-AbzJB1Q2Jfg&bvm=bv.72197243,d.d2k](https://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDEQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mdpag.org.uk%2Fguidelines-Sept2006-1.doc&ei=OwviU5XrA8Sm0AXU0oG4Aw&usg=AFQjCNH-pH7MnefxdkjSP_Xrgf38pvE-AA&sig2=htHP1uFGE-m-AbzJB1Q2Jfg&bvm=bv.72197243,d.d2k)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150), UN Enable,  
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>
- [ITU Technical Paper on Accessible Remote Participation](http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC),  
<http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC>
- [ITU Technical Paper on Accessible Meetings](http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-AM), <http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-AM>
- [World Wide Web Consortium Current status of all W3C accessibility specifications](http://www.w3.org/standards/about.html), <http://www.w3.org/standards/about.html>