

Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) 1st Report to IGF Secretariat (30 June 2008)

1. Introduction

The Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) met via Conference Call on the 27 June 2008 to discuss its participation at next IGF meeting in Hyderabad, India. We are working on the development of the Accessibility Workshop for the main session.

In addition the DCAD submits to IGF the following report on activities and would like to make the request to hold its first face-to-face meeting at next IGF meeting, Hyderabad, India, with the goal to improve accessibility not only on the Internet but at the IGF meetings themselves. On this regard the DCAD will shortly send another report on accessibility problems and the experiences as contributed by Members of the DCAD who attended IGF in Rio, and possible solutions.

2. Scope

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities has highlighted that Accessible to ICT is one of the key obligations that society has in giving equal rights to persons with disabilities.

The Convention has been signed by an unprecedentedly high number of UN Member States in a relatively short time. It entered into force on the 12 May 2008.

"This marks a major milestone in the effort to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity"
(www.un.org/disabilities).

a. DCAD Workshop

The DCAD is working on the organization of the presentations for the workshop *"Including Accessibility and Human Factors in the Universalization of the Internet - How to reach persons with disabilities, the 10% of the next billion"*, on the following topics:

1. *The Human Rights of Persons with disabilities and the Internet.*
2. *Developing countries needs for access to broadband and wireless internet to give disability access and educational access.*
3. *Technical and Universal Design Aspects for Internet accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.*

The detailed agenda will be shortly available to the IGF for comments.

b. The Dynamic Coalition meeting

The Dynamic Coalition meeting will discuss how to best solve the problems of inaccessibility in the following areas, attending meetings and accessibility for persons with disabilities to the internet.

The DCAD meeting will discuss the following topics:

1. *Participation of people with disabilities in the IGF*
 - a. *Are IGF meetings accessible for persons with disabilities*
 - b. *Participating in the planning by persons with disabilities*
 - c. *Sign language interpretation*
 - d. *Real time captioning*

e. Accessible announcements on web, hard copy documents and auditory announcements

2. DCAD and future developments - what needs to be done in the coming years

f. The Internet of tomorrow?

g. Measures to be taken at the world, regional and national levels

h. People with Disabilities' expectations with regards to the communication networking

3. Activities as reported by the members of the Dynamic Coalition

Below is a list of non-comprehensive achievements contributed by the members of the DCAD that directly relate to the work of the DCAD:

ITU Development Sector (ITU-D)

ITU-D in collaboration with member states and sector members is responsible for promoting accessible ICTs to persons with disabilities. This is done by supporting member countries to implement ICT projects for persons with disabilities, capacity building as well as sharing of experiences and best practices through workshops. In the framework of Question 20/1, supports development of Guidelines to help policy makers and regulators mainstream ICT accessibility issues in their national policies and legal frameworks. Clara Luz is the rapporteur of Q.20/1 and is also performing a research on the legal nature of access to Internet. As part of this effort, ITU-D and G3ict and other partners are jointly developing a Toolkit for training policy makers and other stakeholders in developing and implementing ICT policies and strategies to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Such skills will equip countries to meet the dispositions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The toolkit will also serve as a platform for sharing experiences on best practice and will serve as a global electronic repository of policies and strategies on ICT accessibility.

ITU Standardization Sector (ITU-T)

ITU-T has been active in accessibility and human factors for many years in writing technical standards (ITU-T Recommendations) that include accessibility features. The technical work has been mainly done in Study Group 16 (Multimedia), human factors and ergonomics Recommendations had been developed in Study Group 2. Recently a Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF) has been established by ITU-T to coordinate standardization activities in the field within ITU and other outside bodies. ITU-T has organized many workshops on accessibility but most recently two workshops. One was a *Tutorial on Accessibility*, held on 22 April 2008. The Tutorial was addressed to ITU Staff and intended to train ITU concerned departments on how to improve current ITU facilities (websites and meetings) in order to meet the requirements for an accessible ICT infrastructure. The other was a joint Forum with G3ict, held on 21 April 2008 on *"The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities for ICT Standards*. For the first time since the Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly, an international group of stakeholders examined in detail its many implications for ICT accessibility standards.

ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R)

SNS Online gives access to the Space Networks Systems Database of the Radiocommunication Bureau of the ITU used by frequency managers, radiocommunication engineers, and consultants all over the world. After the ITU tutorial on accessibility: "Making ITU Accessible: Web Design, Web Conferencing and Real Time Web Captioning" the Bureau has decided to reengineer the system to comply with accessibility standards and recommendations. We hope to finish the work by the end of October 2008 to be able to present it during the IGF Forum in Hyderabad.

WAI - W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops strategies, guidelines, and resources to make the Web accessible to

people with disabilities. WAI develops its work through W3C's consensus-based process, involving different stakeholders in Web accessibility. These include industry, disability organizations, government, accessibility research organizations, and more. WAI has produced and is widely known for its guidelines which are widely regarded as the international standard for Web accessibility. The WAI guidelines address cross-disability needs for Web content, authoring tools, as well as browsers and media players, to ensure a comprehensive approach to Web accessibility.

ACMA – Australian Communications and Media Authority

The Australian government has commissioned a public inquiry into access to new media by persons with sensory disabilities. In Australia, captioning for people who are deaf or hearing impaired is well established for analogue television, but audio description for people who are blind or vision impaired is only provided occasionally for live theatre. The inquiry aims to identify new opportunities stemming from the digitalization and convergence of multimedia services for information and entertainment, and to benchmark Australian performance and expectations against other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. The availability of captioning and description goes beyond digital television to include cinema, DVDs and the internet—emphasizing the benefits of focusing primarily on accessibility of the multimedia content and secondarily on the distribution format.

G3iCT - The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs

The G3iCT accessibility work includes:

- An Advocacy Initiative of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development voluntarily funded by the private sector, NGOs, academia and public institutions
- Launched December 4, 2006 to promote the Digital Accessibility Agenda of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Awareness Raising Activities: 2,500 + Stakeholders Involved at 19 venues in 18 months
- Publication of the Accessibility Imperative
- G3iCT web site launched fall of 2007 5,000+ unique visitors per month from all around the world
- Digital Accessibility World Report
- "Digital Accessibility Index for Persons with Disability"
- "Toolkit for Policy Makers" (with ITU-D) - Agreement signed, step 1 completed (Content outline, key faculty).

ISOC-AR – Argentina Chapter of Internet Society

The Internet Society Argentina Chapter is engaged in activities related to Web accessibility. We are organizing an annual seminar, two have been done in 2007 and 2008 with the participation of foreign and local experts, officers of the federal government and Diputados and many attendants. We participated in the writing of and lobbying for a project of a law to make mandatory the accessibility for the government websites that was introduced to the Congress. We participate in local and international meetings related to ICT policies and frequently we advocate the web accessibility. There are members of the chapter that are persons with disabilities and also members involved in academic and professional activities related to Web accessibility.

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO advocates for building inclusive knowledge societies where access to information and knowledge helps people to develop themselves and achieve their full potential. UNESCO is committed to ensure the participation of all in knowledge societies and to help improve the capacity of people with disabilities to access information and knowledge. UNESCO works to promote the rights and needs of people with disabilities, to train the trainers and information professionals, such as librarians, to encourage the development of adaptable policy frameworks, and to increase awareness of accessible technologies and support their development.

Mais Diferenças (MD)

Mais Diferenças works with NGOs, governments, and companies to promote inclusive development, i.e. policies and practices that allow and encourage the participation of all persons, with and without disabilities, in all aspects of society. Towards this end MD seeks ICT policies that promote universal design, competition, network neutrality, and open standards.

ICDRI - International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet

As a nonprofit, ICDRI's mission is to increase opportunities for persons with disabilities by identifying barriers to participation and promoting best practices and universal design of ICT for the global community. The principals are founders of the Internet Society Disability and Special Needs Chapter. They also are co-authors of accessible web design books and frequently keynote, publish papers and provide training on law, policy and technology. Consultancies include United Nations agencies; governments around the world as well as standards setting bodies, universities and businesses.

Council of Europe

Council of Europe drew governments' attention to the issue of accessibility of ICT and Internet already through the adoption in 2001 of the Resolution ResAP(2001)3 "Towards full citizenship of people with disabilities through inclusive new technologies". This was followed by the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015¹ that suggests specific actions in the field of Information and Communication. Member States agreed that more actions need to be taken to create goods, including ICTs, services and systems, keeping in mind the needs of all citizens, including people with disabilities. This can be achieved by applying Universal Design principles, as stated in 2001² and 2008³ Council of Europe resolutions on Universal Design.

People Who

The virtual organization People Who (www.peoplewho.org) continues to share information and each other with people who experience mood swings, fear, voices and visions.

Field Code Changed

¹ Recommendation Rec(2006)5 the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe action plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015.

² Resolution ResAP(2001)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the introduction of the principles of Universal Design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment.

³ Resolution ResAP(2008)3 "Achieving full participation through Universal Design".