Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)
Annual report - 2020

DCAD promotes participation for persons with disability in Internet governance and in the IGF. According to WHO, over one billion people have a disability globally. DCAD plays a key and ongoing role in the IGF by advising on and collaborating with the IGF Secretariat to ensure that both onsite and online facilities are accessible.

DCAD activities at the 2020 Virtual IGF

DCAD organised a session in line with the 2020 thematic track of inclusion as well as participating in the Dynamic Coalition main session. Additionally many DCAD members were on other panels and promoted accessibility and other DCAD goals on these panels.

DCAD also advised the MAG and other groups on accessibility issues, for example we wrote a briefing guide on accessible meetings to insure that zoom meetings and the zoom webinar format were accessible for people with disabilities.

As well, DCAD reviewed the online schedule and offered some tips on how to improve accessibility of the overall site.

DCAD Session: Accessibility - Closing the Gap
Friday, November 6, 2020

Closing the gap to improve accessibility for persons with disability is the key focus of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD). This session brought together disability experts presenting their experiences of online meetings during COVID-19 as well as discussing intersessional activities and plans.

Topics discussed:
• DCAD IGF Participation Support Grant
• Experiences of online meetings
• Accessibility of 2020 Virtual IGF
• Proposal for a Best Practice Forum on Accessibility
• National Regional Initiatives
• Dynamic Coalition Liaison
• Mainstreaming Accessibility

2020 IGF DC Main Session
Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Gerry Ellis presented at the main session, making the following points:

1. Discrimination
• 1.3 billion persons with disabilities, a large number in the under developed and developing worlds

- Access to online services is a disproportionate advantage, lack of access is a disproportionate barrier.
- This is true for everyone, but particularly so for persons with disabilities as we often do not have access to alternatives
- COVID-19 related lockdowns have forced society into living digitally but persons with disabilities are often denied access to the digital world
- Inaccessibility of some key websites, apps and online services including online shopping sites
- Public information, including COVID-19 related information, changes quickly and is often not checked for accessibility
- Tools to support working and education from home are not always accessible, although improving
- Persons with disabilities are often poor, thus do not have access to broadband , particularly in the rural global south

2. Good for all internet users and society in general
- Importance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- It is not just us who are saying that inclusion is good for society
- The UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres launched the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy in 2019. He stated "when we remove policies or biases or obstacles to opportunity for persons with disabilities, the whole world benefits."
- Accenture launched a report called "Getting to Equal, the Disability Inclusion Advantage" in December, 2018. It highlights the economic benefits to organisations of the inclusion of persons with disabilities as staff members and customers
- 7 Targets of the SDGs refer explicitly to persons with disabilities. Our inclusion is part of the overall roadmap to global development.
- Increased use of captioning here at the IGF and elsewhere results in a written record that can be shared and searched for key words and concepts.

3. Final comments
- DCAD has made guidelines available to IGF to make meetings accessible. Please use them.
- Please make sure the new IGF web site is accessible
- Although IGF may not have the finances, please work with us to find financers to help persons with disabilities attend, particularly from the global south
- It often costs persons with disabilities more to attend in person because of inaccessible transport, inaccessible hotels and inaccessible meeting venues. Please recognise this.
- All aspects of IGF - please consult with us around accessibility issues. Nothing about us without us.
- Thanks to the sign language interpreters and the captioners

DCAD IGF Participation Fellowship

In 2020, DCAD launched its IGF Participation Fellowship program funded by Google based on the support by Vint Cerf. DCAD is most grateful for this support that enables increased participation by persons with disabilities in the IGF – "Nothing about us without us". This year DCAD provided

funding to three individual participants and one remote hub. A DCAD Fellowship Selection Committee was formed. The Committee developed eligibility and selection criteria, called for applications and selected the first round of DCAD fellows. In future years we aim for several persons with disabilities to receive travel support to the IGF. This will give them an opportunity to interact first-hand, learn from others and increase awareness of accessibility issues.

DCAD Liaison to the Dynamic Coalitions

DCAD began a project to have one of our members attend and be the accessibility liaison to several of the Dynamic Coalitions. This way we can ensure that accessibility issues are kept front and center in their plans. Judith Hellerstein of DCAD spearheaded this issue and we have liaison with several groups and are making an impact by raising awareness of accessibility challenges that allow Zoom meetings, PowerPoint documents and other documents to become more accessible.

DCAD NRI Initiative

In 2020, DCAD initiated engaging with the National Regional Initiatives (NRIs) to ensure that accessibility is considered from the grass-roots level. This includes thinking about accessibility issues when planning your national/regional events, encouraging NRIs to include a person with disability or accessibility advocate to your planning team.

In October 2020, DCAD developed a survey that was uploaded to our website: https://igf-dcad.org/nri-survey/ and promoted to the NRIs through their mailing list. The IGF Secretariat also shared the link, and we had two opportunities to introduce the survey at NRI online meetings.

As of 1st February 2021, feedback has been received from 6 economies:
- Australia
- Kenya
- Italy
- Germany
- Taiwan
- USA

The team will collate the feedback and address the different issues in subsequent DCAD meetings. We would like to thank all those who have responded, the entire NRI team and the IGF Secretariat with special thanks to Anja Gengo.

We are continuing to encourage NRI's to respond to the survey.

DCAD partnership with the ITU's JCA-ACF

DCAD continues its partnership with ITU's JCA-ACF which is led by former DCAD Coordinator Andrea Saks and DCAD member Lidia Best. DCAD members were invited and participated in 2020 meetings.

DCAD website and mailing list

DCAD's website and mailing list is ably managed by Joly MacFie, the Administrator of the Internet Society's Accessibility Special Interest Group. The website gives DCAD the flexibility to host the NRI survey and the DCAD Fellowship application form, for example. Joly MacFie also maintains the membership list that is made available on the website. Further information is at: https://igf-dcad.org