

## **Report of the second meeting of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)**

*(Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 16 November 2009)*

### ***Introduction***

The Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) held its second [first face-to-face meeting on 16 November 2009](#) during the fourth Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. The meeting was open to any interested person or organization and attracted about 30 participants. The DCAD Coordinator, Ms Andrea Saks chaired the meeting. One of the most important goals for the second face-to-face meeting of the DCAD was to finalize the MESSAGE presented to the Main Session on Access and Diversity at the IGF meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh and to set up the future activities of this Dynamic Coalition.

### **Meeting Agenda**

The agenda for the DCAD meeting is reproduced below:

1. Introduction
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Tour de Table
4. Draft MESSAGE from the DCAD to be addressed to the Main session on Access and Diversity, Tuesday 17 November 2009 (Room: The Hall: Summit, 09:30 – 12:00)
5. Work Plan: 2009 and 2010
6. Feedback from IGF participants on accessibility measures taken at this IGF meeting
7. Next Steps and future activities
8. Any Other Business

The relevant documents for the meeting were:

- [Draft MESSAGE](#) to be addressed to the Main session on Access and Diversity on the 17 November 2009
- [MESSAGE](#) delivered at the IGF, Main Session on Access and Diversity, Tuesday 17 November 2009, IGF, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt - Final version

The other DCAD related events held during the IGF:

- ["Global Internet access for persons with disabilities"](#), (Organized by ITU and EBU), 16 November 2009
- ["Best practices for an Accessible Web"](#), (Organized by ITU), 17 November 2009

## Discussion

The [Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability](#) (DCAD) aims to facilitate interaction between relevant bodies and ensure that ICT accessibility is included in the debates around the Internet Governance. This is being done in order to build a future where the sectors of the global community have equal access to the information society.

During the second meeting, the DCAD discussed and adopted the Message, "Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities by the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)". The full text is attached in annex A.

The Message urges all governments to support the process of adoption, ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It states that standards supporting accessibility are voluntary unless they are part of a regulatory or statutory effort by governments. The message enumerates the benefits that Internet, standards, digital publishing standards and accessibility support provide tangible and measureable benefits. They include, among the main ones:

- Improved access for older adults, people with low literacy and people lacking technology skills;
- Improved access for all people including persons with disabilities using mobile devices so that all mobile device features can be operated by the varying abilities of persons with disabilities;
- Improved access for persons with disabilities due to the accessibility.

It also "strongly urges" that the needs of persons with disabilities be included in all aspects of designing, developing, distributing and deploying of appropriation strategies of information and communication technologies, including information and communication services, so as to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, taking into account the universal design principle, existing standards, and the use of assistive technologies.

The Message ends by proposing some practical steps that are practical and are directed to IGF participants, administrations, content providers and the global community to benefit from an "accessible ICT world":

- Provide education and training on the accessible ICT provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Encourage implementation of Internet standards and accessibility support;

- c. Use the Joint ITU/G3ict eAccessibility Toolkit for Policy Makers to educate managers and technical staff on the use of standards<sup>1</sup>

The Dynamic Coalition has also approved an action plan for activities to be carried out in 2010.

During the IGF, ITU, in collaboration with DCAD members, organized two [workshops](#). The first one, "Global Internet access for persons with disabilities", was organized in collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union.

The second one, "Best practices for an Accessible Web" was focused on the best practices for web accessibility. Both workshops highlighted the necessity to make the Internet accessible to all, regardless of individual capabilities of different users.

Most of the panelists were persons with disabilities who brought varied experiences of Internet accessibility from various perspectives.

To mention some of them, Arnoud Van Wijk, from the Real-Time Text Taskforce (R3TF): talked about the Real-Time Text Taskforce, which is a leap forward for accessible internet for people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing", Arun Mehta, who presented the Special Kid (SKID) activities, and the "Challenges for those with mental disabilities. David Wood from the EBU talked about the media content for persons with disabilities and the TV broadcast. Dipendra Manocha from the Daisy Consortium, presented the Digital Accessible information System for persons with print disabilities and on-line libraries project.

For time constraints, the point no. 7 of the agenda couldn't be discussed, therefore it was agreed that a new virtual meeting date would be decided by email.

## **Conclusions**

The primary objectives of the second DCAD meeting was to approve a "Message" addressed to IGF stakeholders and authorities. The document was presented by DCAD representatives, during the main session on Access and Diversity on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009. A video and full transcripts of the main session can be followed respectively at:

For the video: <http://www.un.org/webcast/igf/ondemand.asp?mediaID=pl091117am1>

The transcripts: <http://www.itu.int/oth/T3606000008/en>

Among the panelists, the following ones are members of the Dynamic Coalition: Gerry Ellis, Accessibility and Usability consultant, Feel The Benefit; Shadi Abou Zhara, Activity Lead, WAI International Program Office, W3C; Andrea Saks, Convener of the joint coordination activity on accessibility and human factors, Coordinator, Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability; Cynthia Waddell, Executive Director, International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet (ICDRI).

---

<sup>1</sup> See Joint ITU/G3ict Initiative, eAccessibility Toolkit for Policy Makers at [http://g3ict.com/resource\\_center/toolkit](http://g3ict.com/resource_center/toolkit).

Before delivering the Message, two DCAD panelists, Gerry Ellis and Shadi Abou-Zhara made a demonstration on how work a screen reader and how relevant is the web accessibility. This demonstration drawn a lot of the enthusiasm and the attention from the public attending the main session (300 people in the room).

The DCAD, lead by ITU, with its activities, will continue to facilitate inclusion of the needs of persons with disabilities in the global information society.

As for the captioning, the DCAD meeting, the two workshops and the main session on access and diversity was captioned as well the main session of the as the main session on access and diversity and the 2 workshops organized by ITU and the DCAD. Sign language interpretation was offered for the main session on diversity and access and during the main session of the IGF event.

---

## **ANNEX A**

### **Message on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities by the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) Internet Governance Forum 2009 Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt**

#### **Introduction**

The Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) was formed at the Internet Governance Forum to ensure that information and communications technology (ICT) accessibility is included in the key debates around Internet Governance. The DCAD seeks to build a future where all sectors of the global community have equal access to the Information Society. We are convinced that the entire community can benefit from an "accessible ICT world," as people can be permanently or temporarily disabled due to personal, environmental (e.g., a phone call in a noisy environment) or cultural (e.g., spoken language diversity) conditions. Moreover, we will all grow old and lose abilities that we take for granted now, thus enlarging the part of the population that would benefit from accessible communication. We cannot allow isolation of a part of the population due to lack of appropriate functionality that also prevents the use of ICT resources by everyone to the fullest possible degree.

For these reasons, this Message is aimed at all IGF participants, including Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations and offers practical steps for consideration and implementation.

#### **Rights**

This Message supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>2</sup> whose purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. These rights include equal access to the Internet, to information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services. ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities is a significant obligation of the Convention and supported by the Tunis Commitment of the World Summit on the Information Society<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Internet Standards and Accessibility Support**

This Message promotes the use of internationally recognized and open standards that support accessibility and result in the benefits detailed in this Message. Technical design standards play a critical role in the implementation of accessible ICT. Standards represent a consensus in the industry on the

---

<sup>2</sup> See Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, sixty-first session, resolution A/RES/61/106 of 6 December 2006 at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> See Tunis Commitment, World Summit on the Information Society 2005, at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/7.html>.

components needed to implement accessibility. They also provide certainty for users with disabilities so they can participate in society.

One chief concern is the prevention of barriers to participation by persons with disabilities where the barriers are created by proprietary protocols. Another concern is the need to implement the standards and to address gaps in accessibility support. For example, it was not only until recently that a global inventory of accessibility standards was mapped by JTC1 Special Working Group on Accessibility (SWG-A)<sup>4</sup> – an effort established in 2004 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Electro technical Commission (IEC).

Standards supporting accessibility are voluntary unless they are part of a regulatory or statutory effort by governments. The current crisis has highlighted the need for outreach, education and training on accessibility standards and support. This crisis has also led to significant ICT obligations in the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities that require the accessibility of mainstream technology, interoperability with assistive technology, and equal access to information and communications.

Accessible web design promotes affordability, increased competition, better consumer choice, better security and improved sustainability. As convergence of real-time voice, text and video becomes a reality through Internet innovation, accessibility support and interoperability must remain a priority.

This message calls for all standards setting organizations to ensure that cross-disability accessibility features and support are included in every technical requirement.

## **Benefits**

This Message recognizes that Internet, standards, digital publishing standards and accessibility support provide tangible and measureable benefits including:

- A. Improved access for older adults, people with low literacy and people lacking technology skills;
- B. Improved access for all people including persons with disabilities using mobile devices so that all mobile device features can be operated by the varying abilities of persons with disabilities;
- C. Improved access for persons with disabilities due to the accessibility features for digital TV and IPTV;
- D. Improved access for people using low bandwidth connections and those using older hardware and/or software because they can turn off Internet images, download content quickly and benefit from backwards compatibility for older devices;

---

<sup>4</sup> See JTC1 Special Working Group on Accessibility, standards inventory at <http://www.jtc1access.org/TR29138.html>.

- E. Reduction in web site development and maintenance costs due to the efficiency of the Internet standards, accessibility support , and search engine capabilities;
- F. Increased capability to reach a wider group of people with varying abilities will lead to customer satisfaction, and an increase in market share;
- G. Decrease in legal challenges by persons with disabilities for failure to address accessible ICT; and
- H. Improved access for persons with disabilities that will improve the quality of access for everyone.

### **Universal Design**

This Message adopts the definition of Universal Design as found in Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

“Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

In addition, this Message notes that signatories to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities have the obligation under Article 9 to “promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible ICT and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.”

### **Training**

This Message recognizes that education and training for policy makers, designers, developers, testers, managers, senior executives and other practitioners is crucial to the production of accessible ICT. This includes:

- A. Raising awareness of the benefits of Universal Design at all organizational levels;
- B. Raising awareness of accessibility barriers and the availability of easily implementable technical solutions;
- C. Enabling web developers to acquire accessible technical design skills and to acquire a knowledge base of accessible ICT techniques;
- D. Providing on-going education and training at universities and other educational bodies to ensure adoption of state-of-the-art best practices for accessible ICT;
- E. Dispelling myths and misunderstandings by learning from people who have experienced’ in accessibility and especially from persons with disabilities; and

- F. Providing procurement training on how entities can procure and maintain accessible ICT products and services.

### **Practical Steps**

This Message proposes the following practical steps for IGF participants, administrations, content providers and the global community to benefit from an “accessible ICT world”:

- d. Provide education and training on the accessible ICT provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
  - e. Encourage implementation of Internet standards and accessibility support;
  - f. Use the Joint ITU/G3ict eAccessibility Toolkit for Policy Makers to educate managers and technical staff on the use of standards<sup>5</sup>
- D. Consult stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and older people, throughout all stages of the design and development of Internet applications and ICT products and services;
- E. Ensure that information is available in accessible formats and is collected from users using accessible methods;
- F. Ensure that ICT procurement policies and practices address the procurement of accessible ICT and the maintenance of accessibility features in products and services procured;
- G. Ensure that public and private meetings and consultations are accessible, including online conferencing systems and web-based captioning for remote meeting participants; and
- H. Raise the profile of accessibility in industry, government, educational and private sector products, facilities, programs and services so that accessibility is mainstreamed in all of society.

---

---

<sup>5</sup> See Joint ITU/G3ict Initiative, eAccessibility Toolkit for Policy Makers at [http://g3ict.com/resource\\_center/toolkit](http://g3ict.com/resource_center/toolkit).