

Report of the first meeting of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)

(Hyderabad, India, 6 December 2008)

Introduction

The Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) held its [first face-to-face meeting on 6 December 2008](#) during the third Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Hyderabad, India. The meeting was open to any interested person or organization and attracted about 30 participants. The DCAD Coordinator, Andrea Saks (ITU), wasn't able to participate due to health problems; on her behalf Cynthia Waddell (ICDRI) kindly agreed to Chair the meeting. Panelists who are members of the DCAD included Stefano Polidori (ITU-T/TSB), Peter Major (ITU-R/BR), Hiroshi Kawamura (DAISY Consortium), Jorge Plano (ISOC-AR), Shadi Abou-Zahra (W3C – WAI Initiative), Gabriela Barrios (independent consultant on law & ICT's), Fernando Botelho (Literacy Bridge), Arnoud van Wijk (ISOC) and Dipendra Manocha (Daisy Consortium).

The agenda for the meeting is reproduced below:

Meeting Agenda

1. Approval of the Agenda
2. DCAD Action Plan
3. Hyderabad Declaration on IGF Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (proposed by the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability)
4. Panel discussion to follow up on questions and answers from the ITU Workshop held on the 4th December. The panel will be formed by experts who are Partners of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability.
5. Feedback from IGF participants on accessibility measures taken at this IGF meeting.

Discussions

The [Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability](#) (DCAD) aims to facilitate interaction between relevant bodies and ensure that ICT accessibility is included in the key debates around Internet Governance in order to build a future where all sectors of the global community have equal access to the Information Society. With this in mind, during the meeting, the DCAD discussed and adopted its first declaration "[Hyderabad Declaration on IGF Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#)", full text is attached in [ANNEX A](#).

The Declaration 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 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 Coalition has also approved an "[Action Plan](#)" for activities to be carried out in 2009. The Action Plan is to be found in [ANNEX B](#).

Organizations that were members of the DCAD at the time of the meeting include ACMA, Council of Europe, DAISY Consortium, Digital Accessible Information System Consortium, G3ict, ICDRI, ISOC, ISOC-AR, ITU, Mais Diferenças, NCC, People Who, UNESCO, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. A new member joined during the IGF: the Indian "Centre for Internet & Society".

Also during the IGF, ITU, in collaboration with DCAD members organized a [workshop](#) “Including Accessibility and Human Factors in the Universalization of the Internet - How to reach persons with disabilities, the 10% of the next billion”. Most of the panelists were persons with disabilities who brought varied experiences of Internet accessibility from various perspectives. During the DCAD meeting a question and answer session was dedicated to the workshop.

Conclusions

The primary objectives of the first DCAD meeting was to approve a “Declaration” ([ANNEX A](#)) addressed to IGF authorities, other Dynamic Coalitions and all stakeholders, stating the core views and proposals related to policies in the field of accessibility and disability in Internet, in particular “Internet accessibility” and how to improve it. DCAD will then assist, through this declaration, the IGF in making themselves accessible, starting from the fourth IGF meeting. In addition the meeting discussed and approved an Action Plan for 2009 ([ANNEX B](#)).

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

The DCAD Meeting was captioned thanks to the kind sponsorship of Internet Society (ISOC).

ANNEX A

Hyderabad Declaration on IGF Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities - Proposed by the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)

1. Recalling the historic number of signatories to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the impact of the Convention obligations on information and communication technologies, including the Internet;¹
2. Noting that the WSIS Declaration of Principles for Building the Information Society recognizes persons with disabilities world wide as stakeholders in the building of an inclusive Information Society;²
3. Being encouraged by the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to “promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance process” as directed in the Tunis Agenda, paragraph 72;³
4. Noting, however, with great concern that the disability perspective has not been fully integrated into the proceedings of the Internet Governance Forum partly due to both physical and programmatic barriers to participation by persons with disabilities;
5. Having high hope and confidence in the ultimate power of the united force, among persons with disabilities, IGF Dynamic Coalitions, stakeholders and friends in all sectors around the world, to work for a truly inclusive information society;
6. Therefore, we, participants of the Third Internet Governance Forum meeting held from 3 through 6 December 2008, in the City of Hyderabad, India:
 - a. Urge all governments to support the process of adoption, ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular the enactment of national legislation, as it contains strong elements concerning information and communication accessibility for persons with disabilities;
 - b. Strongly request that any international, regional and national IGF-related development program, funding or assistance, aimed to achieve the inclusive information society be made disability-inclusive, both through mainstreaming and disability-specific approaches;
 - c. Strongly urge 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;
 - d. Strongly urge that basic building blocks of assistive technologies, such as Text to Speech and Speech to Text software, Interactive Voice Command, Real time text solutions, Optical Character Recognition software and language rule tables for Braille transcription, are developed with high priority for all languages of all countries and licensed under an open source license, and open standards for structured access to oral and visual knowledge to enable development of various assistive technologies, such as screen reading software, text reading systems, talking mobile phones, talking ATMs, and real time text alternative communications that depend on these basic building blocks;

¹ See UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities website at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>.

² See WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html>.

³ See Tunis Agenda for the Information Society at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>.

- e. Urge all governments to design ICT procurement and intellectual property policies in a way that promotes the adoption of vendor-neutral solutions, the acquisition of technologies that comply with open standards, and in general implement policies that enable and promote the availability of affordable assistive technologies, including open source software;
- f. Call upon all governments and participants to promote the active and equal involvement of persons with disabilities in all IGF projects, initiatives, and delegations and to make the implementation, evaluation and monitoring of IGF documents and communications to be inclusive of persons with disabilities since this action is paramount for achieving an inclusive society;
- g. Welcome the opportunity for the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) to serve as the experts on accessibility for participants with disabilities and encourage other IGF organizations to join and contribute to the DCAD process of advising IGF in these matters;
- h. Propose to the MAG that a representative from the DCAD serve as an Observer at MAG meetings in order to mainstream the disability perspective and contribute information on accessibility matters; and
- i. Urge the IGF Secretariat and host countries for the IGF to address the DCAD accessibility recommendations concerning the problems encountered by persons with disabilities in their participation at IGF meetings and in their access to the IGF website and remote access hubs.⁴

⁴ See Dynamic Coalition paper on accessibility and disability at IGF meetings at <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/dynamic-coalitions/80-accessibility-and-disability>.

ANNEX B

DCAD Action Plan for 2009

- 1) Move forward and build upon the Hyderabad Declaration on IGF Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
 - 2) Study how to raise the Declaration awareness within the IGF community and the mechanism for wider adoption at IGF level. A way forward to achieve this goal could be to foster its adoption by the other IGF Dynamic Coalitions.
 - 3) Maintain and update regularly the DCAD website with respect to DCAD work, including information on workshops on accessibility and disability in ICT.
 - 4) Study and implement liaisons between DCAD and the other IGF Dynamic Coalitions to provide the disability perspective relevant to the mission and focus of each IGF Dynamic Coalition. One outcome is to open dialogue to mainstream the disability perspective in IGF.
 - 5) Improve the report to IGF on “Accessibility and Disability in IGF meetings” and write Guidelines to IGF Secretariat on how to organize an IGF meeting. In particular taking into consideration the provision of:
 - *Sign language interpretation;*
 - *Real time captioning;*
 - *Accessible announcements on web, hard copy documents developed under the clear print guidelines, agendas in BRAILLE, and auditory announcements;*
 - *Accessibility features for remote access hubs using online conferencing tools (where the online conferencing tool can be used with assistive technology such as screen readers and screen magnifiers and provides for the streaming of captioning);*
 - *Space on the registration form to include participants requests for special needs when they register;*
 - *Etc.*
 - 6) Improve the promotion of the accessibility features at IGF, so more persons with disabilities can join in the future and especially in the planning phase.
 - 7) Study which measures have to be taken at the world, regional and national level in order to take into considerations the expectations and needs of persons with disabilities for communication networking in the Internet.
 - 8) Help the IGF Secretariat in building a website accessible to persons with disabilities. Pay particular attention to the accessibility of electronic survey and feedback forms.
 - 9) Disseminate information and involve more partners in the DCAD work.
 - 10) Propose to the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) that a representative of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) serve as an “observer” at MAG meetings in order to mainstream the disability perspective and contribute information on accessibility matters.
 - 11) Encourage IGF to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities in the debates about Internet Governance.
 - 12) Serve as resource (e.g. answer questions and/or give advice) on accessibility issues to IGF Secretariat.
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