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**ITU Regional Workshop on ICT Accessibility for Persons
with Disabilities for the Africa Region**

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Accessible ICTs: Paradigm Shift

**Cynthia D. Waddell, Juris Doctor
International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet**



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ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH
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Accessible ICTs: Paradigm Shift

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Overview- Paradigm Shift

- Technology Crossroad
- Shift in Disability “Definition”
- ICT Barriers
- Signs of Global Inclusive Society Shift
- Technology Convergence
- Resources

Technology Crossroad

- Explosive Growth of Electronic Commerce
- Shift from Web Content Publishing to Interactive Web Applications
- Web Evolution to Multi-Modality Architecture
- Global Human Rights Alignment

Shift in Disability “Definition”

- Disability is an **evolving** concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
 - Convention Preamble

Shift in Disability “Definition”

- Persons with disabilities **include** those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
 - Article 1 of the Convention

ICT Barriers

- Web Portals that Prevent Persons with Disabilities From Accessing Content & Transactions
- Mainstream ICT that Lack User Interfaces for Persons with Disabilities
- Mainstream ICT that Do Not Interface Seamlessly with Assistive Technology

Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- Global Society Shift from Medical Model to Integration and Full Participation
- Focus on Ability, Integration and Incompatibility between Environment and People with Disabilities
- Merger of Civil Rights Model with Social Rights Model

Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- Growing Recognition of Significant Social Cost if Digital Divide Remains
- Recognition that Accessible Web Design Promotes Equal Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities

Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- Recognition that Accessible Design Benefits Persons *Without Disabilities*:
 - Older Adults
 - People with Low Literacy
 - People Not Fluent in the Language
 - People with Low Bandwidth Connections to the Internet and Older Technologies
 - People who are New and Infrequent Web Users

Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- Emergence of Technical Standards for Accessible Design of ICT
- US: Section 508 Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards
- Industry Standards- W3C WCAG 1.0 (1999)

Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- At Least 26 Countries and Jurisdictions around the World have Adopted Accessible Web Design as a Policy or Law
- Implementation of US Section 508 Accessible Web Rules, W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, or a Hybrid
- See 2006 Global Survey Published in ***Web Accessibility: Web Standards and Regulatory Compliance***

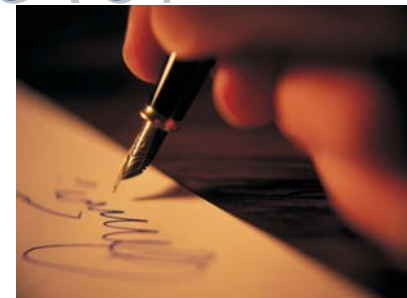
Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Adopted by UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006
- Addresses Rights of 650 Million Persons with Disabilities and Impacts 2 Billion Persons including Family Members of Persons with Disabilities



Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- Number of Signatories on Opening Day of 30 March 2007 are Highest in History
- As of today, 129 Countries Have Signed
- Landmark Treaty Entered Into Force 3 May 2008
- 14 out of first 32 non-procedural Articles of Convention Address ICT obligations of States



Signs of Inclusive Society Shift

- United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities- Article 9: Accessibility (Built Environment and ICT)
 - Ensure Access on an Equal Basis to ICT AND Emergency Services
 - Requires Identification and Elimination of Barriers



Technology Convergence

- Web Combines Communication Media – Voice, Data & Video - Into Single Service
- Previously Separate Technologies are Now Able to Share Resources & Interact to Create New Efficiencies
- Computer Networks with Different Operating Services Can Communicate Via Different Protocols

Technology Convergence

- Critical to Maintain Accessible Design in Coming Complexities
- U.S. FCC Order 15 June 2007 Extends Accessibility Requirements to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Service Providers and Equipment Vendors
- Continue to Build Accessibility into Design of All Technologies & Products

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