

CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

The World Telecommunication Development Conference held in April 2006 in Doha, (WTDC-06) has established a new Special Global Initiative related to the “Access to Telecommunication Services for People with Disabilities” and has requested the BDT Study Group-1 to respond to Question 20/1 on this issue.

Moreover, the topic of “Access to telecommunication services for People with disabilities” represents a crosscut issue with other questions developed by the ITU Study Groups (BDT SG1- and TSB SG-16 <http://web/ITU-T/studygroups/com16/accessibility/index.html>) and ITU-D’s programmes and special global initiatives: children and youth, gender, assistance to indigenous people.

Taking into account that 10% of the world population live with some type of disability a UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities with a special focus on: children and young people (see preamble “r”), gender (see preamble “q”) and indigenous(see preamble “p”), was adopted in December 2006 by the UN General Assembly <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm> and the UN created an “Enable Secretariat” <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disabout.htm> dedicated to this issue.

Therefore, during the Study Group meetings on Question 20/1 in September 2006 and in April 2007, the Rapporteurs Group decided the development of a workshop with the scope of sharing experience on best practices and services for persons with disabilities and create awareness on the specific needs of the persons with disabilities on the bases that access to technologies, facilities and telecommunication services must be provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

2. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The workshop will be open globally for police makers, regulators, and all industries involved in the development of dedicated ICT for persons with disabilities. To increase awareness, the ITU will also propose an Honorary Patron for this initiative dedicated to the people with disabilities. Through the development of this workshop ITU invites all the participants to join us in this ambitious challenge faced to provide ICTs access, use and knowledge for persons with disabilities that gives to the ICTs also a valuable social role.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the workshop is to create a global awareness on the importance of accessibility by all to the Information and Communications Technologies (i) as an appropriate mean to economic, social and laboral integration, (ii) to bridge the digital divide and to provide equal access to the Information Society, and (iii) as the medium to exercise fundamental rights.

Through the development of this workshop ITU also made a call for partnership and support from ITU Member States and Sector Members to work with the BDT to jointly promote and achieve the integration of the People with Disabilities into the Information Society.

4. OUTPUT

The output of this workshop is to enable the Member States to establish policies and execute strategies that promote access to telecommunication services for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the workshop will help the Member States and Sector Members to identify the best practices that telecommunication service providers should apply in relation with the people with disabilities. We consider that public-private partnerships and multistakeholders cooperation and networking are essential to meet the needs of the people with disabilities more effectively towards their access, use and knowledge of ICTs and to extend the implementation of ITU projects and activities that respond to the specific needs of these groups.
