

ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution WGPL/2 (Guadalajara, 2010)

Telecommunication/information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Guadalajara, 2010),
recognizing

a) Resolution 70 (Johannesburg, 2008) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the current studies, initiatives and events on this issue undertaken by the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and its study groups, in

particular Study Group 2 and Study Group 16, in collaboration with the Joint Coordination Activity

on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF);

b) Resolution 58 (Hyderabad, 2010) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on access to ICT for persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities, based

on the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) special initiative work carried out through studies conducted within the framework of Question 20/1 of ITU-D Study Group 1, commencing in September 2006 and proposing the wording of that resolution and, likewise, the

ITU-D initiative on development of an e-accessibility toolkit for persons with disabilities, in collaboration and partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict);

c) ongoing work in ITU-T, the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) and ITU-D to bridge the digital disability divide;

d) the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), calling for special attention to be given to persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities;

e) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force on 3 May 2008 and which requires for States Parties to take appropriate measures for access

for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others to ICT, emergency services and Internet services,

considering

a) that the World Health Organization estimates that ten per cent of the world's population (more than 650 million people) are persons with disabilities, and that this percentage may increase due to factors such as the greater availability of medical treatment and longer life expectancy, and also because people may acquire disability through aging, accidents, wars and circumstances of poverty;

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b) that over the past 60 years, the approach to disability adopted by United Nations agencies,

and by many Member States (through a changed emphasis in their laws, regulations, policies and

programmes), has moved from a health and welfare perspective to a human-rights based approach, which recognizes that persons with disabilities are people first, and that societal actions

have, in certain instances, placed barriers upon them as opposed to their disabilities, and which includes the goal of full participation in society by persons with disabilities;

c) that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force on 3 May 2008, requires States Parties, under Article 9 on Accessibility, to take appropriate measures including:

i) 9(2)(g) "to promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet";

ii) 9(2)(h) "to promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost";

d) the importance of cooperation between governments, the private sector and relevant organizations to provide possibilities for low-cost access,

recalling

a) § 18 of the Tunis Commitment, made at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 2005): "We shall strive unremittingly, therefore, to promote universal,

ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICTs, including universal design and assistive technologies, for all people, especially those with disabilities, everywhere, to ensure that the benefits are more evenly distributed between and within societies, and to bridge the digital divide

in order to create digital opportunities for all and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development";

b) the Phuket Declaration on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities (Phuket, 2007), which emphasizes the need for inclusive emergency warning and disaster management systems using telecommunication/ICT facilities based on open, non-proprietary, global standards;

c) Resolution GSC-14/27 agreed at the 14th Global Standards Collaboration meeting (Geneva 2009), which encouraged greater collaboration among global regional and national standardization bodies as a basis for establishing and/or strengthening activities and initiatives concerning the use of telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities,

resolves

to take account of persons with disabilities in the work of ITU, and to collaborate in adopting a comprehensive action plan in order to extend access to telecommunications/ICTs to persons with

disabilities, in collaboration with external entities and bodies concerned with this subject, *instructs the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Directors of the Bureaux*

1 to coordinate accessibility-related activities between ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D, in collaboration with other relevant organizations and entities where appropriate, in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account;

2 to consider the financial implications for ITU of providing accessible information through ICTs and to ITU facilities, services and programmes for participants with visual, hearing or physical disabilities, including captioning at meetings, access to print information and the ITU website, access to ITU buildings and meeting facilities, and the adoption of accessible ITU recruitment practices and employment;

3 to encourage and promote representation by persons with disabilities so as to ensure that their experiences, views and opinions are taken into account when developing and progressing ITU work;

4 to consider expanding the fellowship programme in order to enable delegates with disabilities, within existing budgetary constraints, to participate in the work of ITU;

5 to identify, document and disseminate examples of best practices for accessibility in the field of telecommunications/ICTs among ITU Member States and Sector Members;

6 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D, in particular concerning awareness and mainstreaming of telecommunication/ICT accessibility standards and in developing programmes that enable developing countries to introduce services that allow persons with disabilities to utilize telecommunication/ICT services effectively;

7 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other relevant organizations and entities, in particular in the interest of ensuring that ongoing work in the field of accessibility is taken into account;

8 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with disability organizations in all regions to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account;

9 to review the current ITU services and facilities, including meetings and events, in order to make them available to persons with disabilities, and to endeavour to make the necessary changes to improve accessibility, where appropriate and economically feasible, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/106;

10 to consider accessibility standards and guidelines whenever undertaking renovations or changing the use of space at a facility, so that accessibility features are maintained and additional barriers are not inadvertently implemented;

11 to prepare a report for submission to each annual session of the Council on implementation of this resolution having regard to the budget allocated for this purpose;

12 to submit a report to the next plenipotentiary conference on measures taken to implement this resolution,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to consider developing, within their national legal frameworks, guidelines or other mechanisms to enhance the accessibility, compatibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services, products and terminals, and to offer support to regional initiatives related to this issue;

2 to consider introducing appropriate telecommunication/ICT services in order to enable persons with disabilities to utilize these services on an equal basis with others, and to promote

international cooperation in this regard;

3 to participate actively in accessibility-related activities/studies in ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D, including participating actively in the work of the study groups concerned, and to encourage and

promote representation by persons with disabilities so as to ensure that their experiences, views

and opinions are taken into account;

4 to take into account *considering c) ii) and d)* above, and the benefits of cost affordability for equipment and services for persons with disabilities, including universal design;

5 to encourage the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund set up by ITU to support activities relating to the implementation of this resolution.