

RESOLUTION 175 (REV. BUSAN, 2014)

**Telecommunication/information and communication technology
accessibility for persons with disabilities
and persons with specific needs**

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Busan, 2014),

recalling

- a)* Article 12 of the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITR), adopted by the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) (Dubai, 2012), which states that Member States should promote access for persons with disabilities to international telecommunication services, taking into account the relevant ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) Recommendations;
- b)* the outcome document of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD) convened by the United Nations General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government on 23 September 2013, under the theme "The ICT Opportunity for a Disability-Inclusive Development Framework", which stresses the need for inclusive development in which persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries;
- c)* Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities, the current regulatory framework and the studies, initiatives and events on this issue undertaken by 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);
- d)* the ITU-T Focus Group on Audiovisual Media Accessibility (FG-AVA), which is working on broadcasting and Internet television in order to include audio description for the visually impaired and captioning/subtitles for the deaf and hearing impaired, as well as accessible remote Internet participation;
- e)* 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;

f) Resolution GSC-14/27 of the 14th Global Standards Collaboration meeting (Geneva, 2009), which encourages greater collaboration among global, regional and national standardization bodies as a basis for establishing and/or strengthening activities and initiatives concerning the use of telecommunications/ICTs accessible to persons with disabilities;

g) 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 Resolution 58 (Hyderabad, 2010) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) and, likewise, the ITU-D initiative on the development of an e-accessibility toolkit for persons with disabilities, in collaboration and partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict),

recognizing

a) the Dubai Declaration (WTDC-14), which lists a series of measures to promote equitable, affordable, inclusive and sustainable development of telecommunication/ICT networks, applications and services;

b) Resolution 58 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC, on accessibility to telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities;

c) ongoing work in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R):

i) Recommendation ITU-R M.1076, entitled "Wireless communication systems for persons with impaired hearing";

ii) relevant parts of the ITU-R Handbook entitled "Digital terrestrial television broadcasting in the VHF/UHF bands", providing guidance on techniques to be used for delivering programmes for people with hearing difficulties;

iii) work to bridge the digital disability divide, including work in ITU-R Study Group 6 on broadcasting and the creation of the new Intersector Rapporteur Group on Audiovisual Media Accessibility (IRG-AVA) between ITU-R and ITU-T;

iv) work in ITU-R Study Group 4 Working Parties 4A and 4B and Study Group 5 Working Party 5A with regard to improving access to digital hearing aids on a global basis;

d) ongoing work in ITU-T:

i) studies under Question 4/2, on human factors related issues for improvement of the quality of life through international telecommunications, and Question 26/16, on accessibility to multimedia systems and services, including Recommendation ITU-T F.790 on telecommunication accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities;

ii) publication by the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group of the guide for ITU-T study groups entitled "Considering end-user needs in developing recommendations;"

- iii) JCA-AHF for the purposes of awareness-raising, advice, assistance, collaboration, coordination and networking;
- e) ongoing work in ITU-D:
 - i) studies under Question 7/1, on access to telecommunication/ICT services by persons with disabilities and with specific needs;
 - ii) the Dubai Action Plan (WTDC-14);
- f) that the strategic plan for the Union for 2016-2019, as approved by this conference, includes intersectoral objective I.5: "Enhance access to telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities and specific needs" and related outcomes and outputs;
- g) 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;
- h) that the ITU-coordinated WSIS+10 High-Level Event on the WSIS vision beyond 2015 identified accessibility among the priority areas that must be tackled in the application of the post-2015 WSIS outcomes;
- i) § 13 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and § 18 of the Tunis Commitment, reaffirming the commitment to providing equitable and affordable access to ICTs, especially for persons with disabilities and specific needs;
- j) various regional and national efforts to develop or revise guidelines and standards for telecommunications/ICT;
- k) ITU's accessibility policy for persons with disabilities, adopted by the ITU Council in 2013;
- l) that webcasting and captioning are invaluable tools, which benefit persons with disabilities and specific needs,

considering

- a) that the World Health Organization estimates that there are one billion persons with varying degrees of physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities in the world, meaning 15 per cent of the world's population, and 80 per cent of them live in developing countries¹;
- b) that ICTs can provide opportunities and benefits for women and girls with disabilities to overcome exclusion on the basis of their gender and disability;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

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 (2g) "*To promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet*";
- ii) 9 (2h) "*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) that the United Nations Human Rights Council established the Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to allow identification of the barriers and obstacles still faced by persons with disabilities in achieving their full, effective participation in society, whose mandate will be to work in close coordination with all mechanisms and entities of the United Nations system, regional mechanisms, civil society and organizations of and for persons with disabilities, and will incorporate the perspectives of gender, international cooperation and capacity building in all its activities, in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

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

f) that it is necessary for governments and multiple stakeholders to pay attention to the outcomes in the report jointly prepared by G3ict and Disabled People's International (DPI), given that the accessibility of the information infrastructure, considered an essential area of ICT accessibility that has an enormous impact on the greatest number of users, falls short of the level of progress called for by the provisions in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in terms of general compliance on the part of the countries that have ratified it,

resolves

1 to involve persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the work of ITU so that they may collaborate in the adoption of a comprehensive action plan in order to extend access to telecommunications/ICTs, in collaboration with external entities and bodies concerned with this topic;

2 to foster dialogue between those who prepare statistics on telecommunications/ICTs and users with disabilities, in order to obtain better information and knowledge about which data to collect and analyse at the national level using international standards and methods;

3 to boost a call to action promoting cooperation with regional and global organizations and institutions that deal with accessibility for persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities, in order to include accessibility to telecommunications/ICTs in their agendas and take into account its cross-cutting nature with other topics;

4 to maximize use of webcasting facilities and captioning (including transcripts of the captioning), and if possible, considering the financial and technical limitations of the Union, provide it in all six official languages of the Union both during and after the conclusion of any session when convening conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union as articulated in Chapter II, Section 12 "Setting up of committees of the General rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union",

instructs the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Directors of the Bureaux

1 to coordinate accessibility-related activities between ITU-R, ITU-T 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 and persons with specific needs, including age-related disabilities, are taken into account;

2 to consider the financial implications for ITU of providing, within the available resources, accessible information through ICTs and access to ITU facilities, services and programmes for participants with visual, hearing or physical disabilities and persons with specific needs, including captioning at meetings, sign language interpretation, 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 pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/106, 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;

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

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

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

7 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with ITU-R, ITU-T 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 and persons with specific needs, including age-related disabilities, to utilize telecommunication/ICT services effectively;

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

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

10 to direct the regional offices, within their available resources, to organize regional competitions for the development of assistive technologies to enable persons with disabilities and specific needs, having due regard to differences in culture and languages and taking into account the presence of developers with disabilities;

11 to make use of and share information regarding the ways in which ICTs can empower persons with a wide range of disabilities and specific needs, for example guidelines, tools and information sources prepared by ITU and other relevant organizations such as G3ict which are of benefit to the work of ITU and the membership;

12 to encourage the regional offices, within their available resources, to cooperate with stakeholder concerned to promote the development of new technologies that enable persons with disabilities and specific needs;

13 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 and to encourage the development of applications for telecommunication devices and products in order to enable persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to utilize these services on an equal basis with others, and to promote international cooperation in this regard;

3 to promote the development of learning opportunities in order to train persons with disabilities to use ICTs for their social and economic development, including through train-the-trainer courses and distance learning;

4 to participate actively in accessibility-related activities/studies in ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D, including participating actively in the work of the study groups concerned, and to include and promote representation by persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs so as to ensure that their experiences, views and opinions are taken into account;

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

6 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.