

RESOLUTION 58 (Hyderabad, 2010)

Access to information and communication technology for persons with disabilities, including persons with age-related disabilities

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Hyderabad, 2010),

recognizing

- a) the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) special initiative on persons with disabilities, and studies under ITU-D Question 20/1 on access to telecommunication services for persons with disabilities;
- b) that the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in partnership with G3ict (Global Initiative for Inclusive Information Communication Technologies)¹, has elaborated an e-Accessibility toolkit for policy-makers, which is freely available and accessible online, in order to (i) facilitate development of best policies and strategies for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; (ii) provide a platform for sharing best practices on information and communication technology (ICT) disability issues; and (iii) set forth action steps for an effective policy framework;
- c) Resolution 70 (Johannesburg, 2008) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly relating to telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- d) the following actions in the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (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 the recent 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 study groups entitled "Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations"; and (iii) creation of the Joint Coordination Activity on accessibility and human factors for the purposes of awareness-raising, advice, assistance, collaboration, coordination and networking;
- e) ongoing work in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector to bridge the digital disability divide;
- f) the formation by the Internet Governance Forum of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability, in which ITU-D participates,

considering

- a) that the World Health Organization estimates that ten per cent of the world's population has some type of disability, and that there are different types of disabilities (e.g. physical, mental and sensorial disabilities), each requiring special considerations when designing ICT public policy;

¹ A flagship advocacy initiative of UN-GAID, the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

b) that one of the main challenges for the design and implementation of public policy for ICT accessibility is the non-availability of statistics that reflect access or use of ICT by persons with disabilities, many countries having only generic statistics on their population with disability without distinguishing between each type of disability or multiple disabilities (e.g. blind and deaf persons);

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

- 1) ensure ICT and emergency service access to persons with disabilities on an equal basis (Article 9, § 1(*b*));
- 2) promote ICT access for persons with disabilities to new ICT services, including Internet (Article 9, § 2);
- 3) promote the design, production and distribution of accessible ICT at an early stage (Article 9, § 2(*h*));
- 4) ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion (Article 21);
- 5) provide information in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost (Article 21, § (*a*));
- 6) urge private entities that render services to the public to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities (Article 21, § (*c*));
- 7) encourage mass media (including information providers through Internet) to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities (Article 21, § (*d*));

d) that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further states that there is discrimination on the basis of disability if there is denial of reasonable accommodation, considering "reasonable accommodation" to mean necessary and appropriate modification or adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (i.e. freedom of speech, access to information) (Article 2);

e) that States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities undertake to collect adequate information for formulating and implementing policies to give effect to the Convention, and that this information must be disaggregated, and should help identify and address barriers faced by persons with disabilities in exercising their rights (Article 31);

f) that maximizing access to ICT services, products and terminals for persons with disabilities will support autonomy of persons with disabilities, by enabling e-learning, enhancing their suitability for ICT jobs, allowing them to benefit from e-health, and such like;

g) that United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/106 adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requests the Secretary-General (in § 5) "... to implement progressively standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system, taking into account relevant provisions of the Convention, in particular when undertaking renovations";

h) that persons with disabilities, both acting as individuals and through relevant organizations, should be involved in and participate in the process of elaborating legal/regulatory provisions, public policy and standards, pursuant to the rationale of "Nothing about us without us",

recalling

a) that the World Summit on the Information Society acknowledged that special attention should be given to the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities: (i) when elaborating national cyberstrategies, including educational, administrative and legislative measures; (ii) for using ICT in education and human resources development; (iii) in order that equipment and services offer easy and affordable access, under the principles of universal design and assistive technology; (iv) to promote telework and to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; (v) for creation of content that is pertinent to persons with disabilities; and (vii) to create the required abilities for the use of ICT by persons with disabilities²;

b) the Cairo Declaration (November, 2007) and the Lusaka Declaration (July, 2008) on supporting access to ICT services for persons with disabilities, as well as the Phuket Declaration on tsunami preparedness for persons with disabilities (March, 2007) and the Hyderabad Declaration of the Internet Governance Forum on accessibility for persons with disabilities (December 2008),

taking into account

a) the principles that should govern ICT services, equipment and software in order to be accessible, namely: universal design, equal access, functional equivalence, accessibility, and affordability;

b) that ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities should be achieved through cooperation between governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society;

c) the importance of coordination and exchange of information by and between United Nations bodies concerned;

d) the prevailing difference in ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities in the regions, in countries, and within each country,

resolves to invite Member States

1 to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to take the relevant measures to effectively make ICT services, equipment and software accessible to persons with disabilities;

2 to develop national laws, regulations, policies, guidelines or other mechanisms for ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the principles of equal access, functional equivalence, affordability and universal design, taking full advantage of available tools, guidelines and standards;

² Geneva Declaration of Principles, §§ 13 and 30; Geneva Plan of Action, §§ 9 e) and f), 19 and 23; Tunis Commitment, §§ 18 and 20; Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, § 90 c) and e).

- 3 to collect disaggregated data on ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities aimed at creating e-accessibility statistics and – in the near future – relevant indicators that will contribute to the policy-making process;
- 4 to consider introducing ICT-accessible services for persons with disabilities, such as telecommunication/relay services (hearing and speech disabilities), accessible websites, public phones with accessibility features (e.g. volume control, information in Braille), public schools, institutions and community centres with a range of accessible equipment including screen readers, Braille printers, hearing aids, among others;
- 5 to encourage and enable active participation by persons with disabilities, both as individuals and as organizations, in the policy-making process for ICTs and related areas where ICTs have an impact, by ensuring that the consultation process, meetings and/or surveys are accessible to participation by persons with disabilities;
- 6 to promote and undertake research and development of ICT-accessible equipment, services and software, with emphasis on free and open-source software and affordable equipment and services;
- 7 to envisage establishing a programme that considers ICT-accessibility priorities, to be periodically reviewed in order to ensure its relevance to the specific local conditions of a country/region, with a view to progressive implementation;
- 8 to mainstream ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, which involves taking into consideration accessibility principles in a cross-cutting manner;
- 9 to consider exemption from taxes and customs duties on ICT devices and assistive equipment for persons with disabilities, in accordance with the national regulations on this matter;
- 10 to establish ongoing and permanent collaboration between developed and developing countries in order to exchange information, technology and best practices related to ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities,

invites Sector Members

- 1 to adopt a self-regulation approach for rendering ICT equipment and services accessible for persons with disabilities, it being expressly understood that self-regulation does not override legal and regulatory provisions;
- 2 to adopt a universal design principle from an early stage when designing, producing and creating ICT equipment, services and software, so as to avoid costly retrofitting measures;
- 3 to promote, if applicable, research and development on ICT-accessible equipment, services and software, having due regard to affordability for persons with disabilities;
- 4 to take due account of the needs of persons with disabilities, encouraging their active participation so as to receive first-hand information on their requirements for ICT accessibility;
- 5 to collaborate with Member States in order to render ICTs accessible for persons with disabilities,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

- 1 to ensure that each ITU-D programme, project or activity takes into account ICT-accessibility issues and is adapted to the needs of all persons with disabilities, including persons with age-related disabilities;
- 2 to develop and/or update tools and guidelines for use/reference by Member States in mainstreaming ICT-accessibility issues in their national/regional policies and regulations, and provide the necessary capacity building;
- 3 to identify and document examples of best practice for accessibility in the field of telecommunications/ICT for dissemination, sharing of experiences and provision of information among ITU Member States and Sector Members;
- 4 to consider holding seminars, symposia or forums for policy-makers, telecommunication regulators and Sector Members at which ICT-accessibility policies are presented and discussed, and also to promote the elaboration of books, reports or literature that address ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- 5 to collaborate with the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau on accessibility-related activities, particularly in creating awareness and mainstreaming telecommunication/ICT accessibility policies, as well as creating programmes that enable countries to introduce services which allow persons with disabilities to utilize ICT services effectively, reporting the findings to the Council, as appropriate, in both cases;
- 6 to collaborate and cooperate with relevant United Nations entities and disability organizations in all regions in order to generate awareness of the need for the design and implementation of policies or self-regulatory approaches that will make ICTs accessible for persons with disabilities;
- 7 to ensure that the needs of the communities of persons with disabilities are taken into account in the provision of ICT equipment, services and software;
- 8 to consider the development of an internship programme for persons with disabilities who have expertise in the field of ICTs, so as to build capacity among persons with disabilities in the public policy-making process;
- 9 to designate a focal point for ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, and to strengthen the special initiative on persons with disabilities,

further instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

to review, in consultation with the Secretary-General, the accessibility of ITU services and facilities, including meetings and events, to consider taking actions, where appropriate, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/106, and to inform Member States and Sector Members about the implementation of such actions, as appropriate.