

Regional Event Results

Accessible Americas II: Information and Communication for ALL

4 to 6 November 2015

Medellin, Colombia

The accessibility of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has common goals and objectives in all countries of the world. The Americas region, aware and committed to the issue of digital inclusion and ICT accessibility for People with Disabilities (PWD) has met at the regional event "**Accessible Americas II: Information and Communication for ALL**".

We, the participants in this event, recognize and reaffirm that there are similar challenges in the Americas, which enable telecommunications/ICT accessibility to become a reality for **ALL** inhabitants of this continent.

We note that despite the challenges identified there are also opportunities that we must seize in the Americas to achieve that the American continent become inclusive and may achieve full accessibility to telecommunications/ICT and use these ICTs as a tool for economic and social empowerment of PWD.

The opportunities identified as relevant for purposes of achieving the accessibility of ICT were the following:

- i. American countries share a common historical background;
- ii. That there is a richness in diversity of cultures in the Americas, where the majority of countries speak Spanish, but there are also countries that speak English, French and Portuguese;
- iii. That the needs of our countries in terms of telecommunication/ICT accessibility for PWD are the same.

Therefore, the cultural heritage that we have, gives us an opportunity to achieve throughout the Americas telecommunications/ICT accessibility in a more simple way, in less time and at a lower cost. In addition, we note that only a joint effort of cooperation of the multiple stakeholders involved will lead to an effective implementation of telecommunications/ICT accessibility policies for **ALL**.

This event has helped to strengthen a social inclusion regional policy, the democratization of information and communication and to promote and make visible the integration of government projects, private sector, academia and civil society at large, which are in line with the following documents of international reference:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of PWD,
- ITU Resolutions:

- ✓ R-175/PP Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 on "Accessibility of Telecommunications/ICT for the PWD and with special needs";
 - ✓ R-58/CMDT2014 World Telecommunication Conference 2014 related to "Accessibility of telecommunications and ICT for PCD including age-related disabilities";
 - ✓ R-70/WTSA 2012 (Assembly of the World Telecommunication Standardization on the Accessibility of telecommunications/ICT for the PCD);
 - ✓ Resolution 200/PP14 Goal 2 of the "Agenda 2020 connected to global development of telecommunications for ICT" which refers to the objective 2.5.b for "enabling existing environments by 2020 to ensure telecommunication/ICT accessible to people with disabilities in all countries";
- ITU-G3ict Report on a Model ICT Accessibility Policy;
 - The work of the ITU-D Study Group 1, Question 7 on "Access to telecommunication/ICT for people with disabilities and with specific needs" as well as the work of ITU-T in the area of accessibility;
 - The **Guidelines and Principles** identified for the promotion of ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities from the Americas region prepared at the Regional Event "**Accessible America: Information and Communication for ALL**" held in November 2014 in Sao Paulo, Brazil; **to which we reiterate our recognition and full exercise of the same**, adding the necessary actions to support the implementation of accessible telecommunications/ICT in the Americas region.

From the information provided, shared experiences and the exchange of ideas made along this Regional Event, a forum for dialogue where projects, initiatives and actions identified was created, including national public policies, best practices, challenges and needs related to the promotion and successful implementation of telecommunications/ICT accessibility policies for PCD in the Americas region.

The topics of general interest analyzed and shared at this Regional Event have led us to **identify the following common specific requirements and priorities of the Americas region:**

1. Support Member States in developing and/or implementing a Model ICT Accessibility Policy in the area of accessibility;
2. Development of capacity building in the area of ICT accessibility and in particular, on the guidelines for accessible web sites to be implemented at the regional level;
3. Development of capacity building on accessible digital formats;
4. Involve all stakeholders (Governments, Academia, Private Sector and Civil Society) in the development of a research to identify the regional challenges in terms of telecommunications/ICT.

5. Invite to share and identify ICT accessibility best practices by providing a common space using collaborative tools (eg. ITU-G3ict "e-accessibility toolkit") in order to create incentives, disseminate ICT accessibility projects, initiatives and actions and facilitate the implementation of such practices in the Americas region;
6. ITU's support to the Americas Region to promote telecommunications/ICT accessibility as a Regional Initiative;
7. ITU to incorporate in its core work the organization, coordination and recognition of the "**Accessible Americas: *Information and Communication for ALL***" as an annual regional event, in order to facilitate the follow-up of achievements and to encourage further ICT accessibility digital inclusion actions for PWD in Member countries of this region;
8. ITU to promote this annual event integrating all stakeholders (governments, academia, private sector and civil society) to facilitate decision-making and increase the impact of telecommunications/ICT accessibility in all areas fostering economic and social development of the Americas Region.

Participants in this regional event are grateful to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MINTIC) of the Republic of Colombia and to the ITU for organizing this valuable meeting and are committed to make every effort to participate in the next event "**Accessible America III: *Information and Communication for ALL***" that will be held in Mexico in 2016, and to submit contributions and achievements in order to continue the development of telecommunications/ICT accessibility in the Americas Region.