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| Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC) | | | |
| Draft revision of Resolution 58 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017)  “Telecommunication/information and communication technology accessibility  for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs” | | | |
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| **Agenda item:**  Item 7.2  **Summary:**  This contribution contains draft revisions of the WTDC-17 Resolution 58, considering the PP-18 Resolution 175 as well as the current activities of ITU-D Study Group 1.  **Expected outputs**  This document, contained a draft RCC Common proposal, has been submitted to the RPM-CIS (April 2021) for information.  **References:**  Resolution 58 (rev. Buenos Aires, 2017)  Resolution 175 (rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference | | | |

RESOLUTION 58 (Rev. Addis Ababa, 2021)

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

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Addis Ababa, 2021),

*recognizing*

a)

b) Resolution 175 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

c) Resolution 70 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

d) Article 8B of the International Telecommunication Regulations, adopted by the World Conference on International Telecommunications (Dubai, 2012), which states that Member States should promote access for persons with disabilities to international telecommunication services, taking into account the relevant Recommendations of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T);

e) The United Nation Flagship Report on Disability and Development which considers telecommunication/ICT accessibility as a critical element for ensuring inclusion and the achievement of other SDGs for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, as well UNGA Resolution A/RES/73/142 that encourages Member States to promote access to information and communication, including information and communications technologies and systems, to ensure that accessibility is promoted to achieve inclusive societies and development;

f) the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) digital inclusion initiative, which promotes telecommunication/ICT accessibility and use for the economic and social development of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

g) the formation of the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information Communication Technologies (G3ict), and related activities/actions;

h) Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report for policymakers, regulators and service providers, elaborated by Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) in partnership with G3ict and available online, in order to: i) facilitate development of best policies and strategies for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD); and ii) set forth action steps for an effective policy framework;

i) ITU-T and ITU-R activities related to accessibility issues ;

j) the formation by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD), sponsored by the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) and supported by ITU-T and ITU-D, aimed to ensure equal access to Information Society by including the accessibility issues to the activities related to Internet goverance;

k) the related resolutions from the Global Standards Collaboration (GSC) meetings;

l) activities relating to the development of new standards (e.g. ISO TC 159, JTC 1 SC35, IEC TC100, ETSI TC HF and W3C WAI), and the implementation and maintenance of existing standards (e.g. ISO 9241-171);

*considering*

a) that the World Health Organization estimates that over one billion of the world's inhabitants live with some form of disability, and that there are different types of disabilities (e.g. physical, cognitive and sensorial disabilities), each requiring special considerations when designing telecommunication/ICT public policy;

b) that the UNCRPD, which came into force on 3 May 2008, requires States Parties to take appropriate measures, namely:

1) undertake or promote research and development on, and promote the availability and use of, new technologies, including ICTs, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies at an affordable cost (Article 4, section 1 (g));

2) ensure ICT and emergency service access for persons with disabilities on an equal basis (Article 9, § 1(b));

3) promote ICT access for persons with disabilities to new ICT services, including Internet (Article 9, § 2 (g));

4) promote the design, production and distribution of accessible ICT at an early stage (Article 9, § 2(h));

5) ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion (Article 21);

6) provide information in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost (Article 21, § (a));

7) 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));

8) encourage mass media (including information providers through Internet) to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities (Article 21, § (d));

c) that, in addition, the UNCRPD 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);

d) that States Parties to the UNCRPD 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);

e) that the Outcome Document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities “The Way Forward: A Disability-inclusive Development Agenda towards 2015 and beyond” considers universal design approach, among others, as the key element to ensure the accessibility of information, assistive devices such as telecommunication and communication technologies, including in remote or rural areas, to achieve the fullest potential throughout the whole life cycle of persons with disabilities.

f)

g)

h) i) that maximizing access to ICT services, applications, software and equipment for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs will support to the increase of digital literacy, and therefore equal access to education, healthcare and employment;

j) that persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, 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";

*taking into account*

a) that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) acknowledged that special attention should be given to the needs of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs: 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 disabilities and persons with specific need;[[1]](#footnote-2)

b) that the implementation of the relevant WSIS action lines will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 9.c (Significantly increase access to ICT and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020);

c) the necessity of accessibility features of ICT services, equipment and software and applications in order to be accessible, namely: universal design, equal access, functional equivalence, affordability;

d) that telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs should be achieved through the formulation of coherent policy and cooperation between governments, specialized bodies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations civil society and persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

e) importance of coordination and exchange of information by and between United Nations bodies concerned to create the comprehensive approach to the telecommunication/ICT accessibility related issues;

f) the prevailing difference in telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the regions, in countries, and within each country, emphasizing that 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries[[2]](#footnote-4), according to the United Nations Development Programme;

g) that women and girls with disabilities suffer multiple disadvantages, being excluded on account of their gender and their disability,

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promotement ofprovision of

3 to assist Member States, as appropriate, in developing their national strategies to address the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with special needs in telecommunication/ICT services;

4to continue further close collaboration with Member States on and to encourage them to submit contributions with national experience on ensuring the telecommunication/ICT accessibility

5promote on the telecommunication/ICT accessibility related issues as well as deliverables

dealing with accessibility related issues as well as with regional associations of persons with disabilities to ensure their social and economic inclusion with the help of telecommunication/ICT;

7 collaborate with ITU-R and ITU-T on issues related to telecommunication/ICT accessibility, take into account the results of their work when preparing toolkits, guidelines and programs for Member States on telecommunication/ICT accessibility issues, and, as appropriate, report to the Council on the results of such cooperation;

and persons with specific needsto develop policies promoting accessibility

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telecommunication/ and persons with specific needs*Instructs ITU-D Study Group 1*

1 to assist Member States in identifying the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in accessible ICT services, equipment, software and applications;

2 to identify best practices in ICT services, hardware, software and applications accessibility based on contributions from Member States, Sector Members and other interested stakholders, and in collaboration with ITU-T and ITU-R;

3 to promote experiences and best practices sharing on ICT services, equipment, software and applications accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to bridge the digital divide and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.*resolves to invite Member States*

1 to ratify UNCRPD and to consider interests of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs while developing policy framworks, including laws, regulations, rules, guidelines in the fiel of telecommunication/ICT at the national and domestic levels, in order to promote the social and economic inclusion to all members of society, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2 and persons with specific needs

3 persons with specific needs4 principles of equal access, functional equivalence, affordability and universal design, taking full advantage of available tools, guidelines and standards;

5 and persons with specific needstelecommunication/

6 to consider establishing a government procurement policy for accessible telecommunications/ICTs, establishing accessibility criteria;

7 to raise awareness on activities and decisions made by government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to ensure telecommunications/ICT accessibility, so that persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs are timely and fully informed about new opportunities and possibilities;

8 to continue strengthening the collection and analysis of disaggregated data and statistics on disability related to telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, aimed at creating e-accessibility statistics and similarly relevant indicators that will contribute to the public policy design, planning and implementation process;

9 to promote introduction and wide usage of telecommunication/ICT relay services[[3]](#footnote-5) subtitling, audiodescription for people with hearing, speech or vision disabilities, or any combination of these disabilities to ensure television programs, as well as digital television content accessibility

10 to promote accessible websites especially socially significant for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs such as e-government websites etc.

11 to promote the establishment of educational institutions, especially the primary stage institutions and community centresas well promotion of public phones with accessibility features (e.g. volume control, information in Braille);

12 to promote and undertake research and development on ICT accessible equipment, services, applications and software, with emphasis on free and open-source software and affordable equipment and services;

13 to establish ongoing and permanent collaboration between developed and developing countries in order to exchange information, technology and best practices related to telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

14 to participate actively in accessibility-related studies in ITU-D, ITU-T and ITU-R, and to encourage and promote self-representation by persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the development and standardization process, so as to ensure that their experiences, views and opinions are taken into account in all the work of the study groups;

15 to promote the development of learning and capacity-building opportunities to train persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to use telecommunication/ICTs for their social and economic development, including through train-the-trainer courses and distance learning, for a more inclusive society;

*invites Sector Members*

1 to consider accessibility issues in their activities in the field of telecommunications/ICT;

2 to adopt a universal design principle from an early stage when designing, producing and creating ICT equipment, services, applications and software, so as to avoid costly measures on personalisation for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

3 to promote research and development of ICT accessible equipment, services, application and software, having due regard to affordability for persons with disabilities and persons specific needs;

4 to collaborate with Member States to share experience and best practices on telecommunication/ICT accessibility issues ;

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1. 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) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
3. Telecommunication relay services enable users of different modes of communication (e.g. text, sign, speech) to interact by providing convergence between the modes of communication, usually through human operators [↑](#footnote-ref-5)