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|  | Resolution 70 – Telecommunication/ information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs | |

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FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of tele­com­mu­ni­ca­tions, and information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU‑T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of ITU-T Recommendations is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSA Resolution 1.

In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

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RESOLUTION 70 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024)

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

(Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016; Geneva, 2022; New Delhi, 2024)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (New Delhi, 2024),

recognizing

*a)* Resolution 175 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

*b)* Resolution 58 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and WTDC Resolution 17 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), on implementation of and cooperation on approved regional initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels;

*c)* Resolution ITU‑R 67‑2 (Rev. Dubai, 2023) of the Radiocommunication Assembly, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

*d)* the mandate of the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF) for the purposes of awareness-raising, advice, assistance, collaboration, coordination and networking and the work developed, in particular the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU‑T) efforts to increase cooperation with other United Nations organizations and activities, as well as all United Nations specialized agencies, in order to raise awareness of ICT accessibility in the framework of standardization, and ITU‑T efforts aimed at upholding JCA-AHF;

*e)* studies carried out by ITU‑T study groups, in particular ITU‑T Study Group 21, on the accessibility of multimedia systems and services for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

*f)* studies under Question 7/1 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D), on access to telecommunication/ICT services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs;

*g)* the studies carried out by the Inter-Sector Rapporteur Group on audiovisual media accessibility (IRG-AVA) on audiovisual content accessibility and by Working Group 8, under the ITU‑T Focus Group on metaverse (FG-MV), on sustainability, accessibility and inclusion;

*h)* the activity carried out by the Internet Governance Forum Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability for the purposes of maximizing the benefits of electronic communications and online information through the Internet for all sectors of the global community;

*i)* the activity carried out by the ITU Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues on issues related to access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs;

*j)* the publication by the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) of the guide for ITU study groups: Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations;

*k)* the publication of Recommendation ITU‑T F.930, on multimedia telecommunication relay services;

*l)* the publication of Recommendation ITU‑T F.790, on telecommunications accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities,

considering

*a)* that the World Health Organization estimates that more than one billion of the world's population live with some form of disability, of whom almost 200 million experience considerable difficulty in their daily lives, and it is to be expected that, in the future, disabilities will rise because of the increasing population of older persons and the risk that disability is greater among older persons;

*b)* that maximizing the accessibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services, products and terminals through universal design will increase their uptake by all persons, including persons with disabilities and older persons, and thereby increase revenues;

*c)* the importance of enhancing accessibility in emerging telecommunications/ICTs;

*d)* that United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/106, adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, requests the United Nations Secretary-General "… 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";

*e)* the importance of cooperation between governments, the private sector and relevant organizations to promote affordable access to technologies,

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, …";

*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)* Article 12 of the International Telecommunication Regulations,

taking into account

*a)* Resolution 44 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024) of this assembly, on bridging the standardization gap between developing[[1]](#footnote-1)1 and developed countries, and Resolution 18 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024) of this assembly, on strengthening coordination and cooperation among the three ITU Sectors on matters of mutual interest;

*b)* Resolution GSC‑17/26 (revised), on user needs, considerations and involvement, agreed upon at the 17th Global Standards Collaboration meeting (Jeju, Republic of Korea, 2013);

*c)* publications of the Special Working Group on Accessibility (ISO/IEC JTC 1 SWG – Accessibility) of the Joint Technical Committee for information technology (JTC 1) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), as well as the Mandate M 376 project teams, identifying user needs and developing a comprehensive inventory of existing standards as part of the ongoing effort to identify areas where research or new standards work is needed;

*d)* the activities of ITU‑T Study Group 21, which is the lead study group on human factors and ICT accessibility for digital inclusion;

*e)* 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);

*f)* the joint efforts of ITU and the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT), including the development of the Model ICT accessibility policy;

*g)* the outcome report on ITU‑D Question 7/1, on access to telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs (July 2021), and the ITU‑D report *Aging in a digital world – from vulnerable to valuable* (May 2021);

*h)* various international, regional and national efforts to develop or revise guidelines and standards for telecommunication/ICT accessibility, compatibility and usability by persons with disabilities,

resolves

1 that ITU‑T Study Group 21 shall continue giving high priority to work on the relevant Questions, Recommendation ITU‑T F.790 on telecommunication accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities, and Recommendation ITU‑T F.791, on accessibility terms and definitions;

2 that ITU‑T study groups should continue developing standards on emerging ICTs for accessibility;

3 that ITU‑T Study Group 21 should continue developing standards on accessibility of distribution systems for enabling seamless user experience for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

4 that ITU‑T study groups consider incorporating universal design principles into their work, including the drafting of non-discriminatory standards, service regulations and measures for all persons, including persons with disabilities and older persons, with cross-cutting user-protection actions;

5 that all ITU‑T study groups utilize the Telecommunications Accessibility Checklist, which makes it possible to incorporate the principles of universal design and accessibility to support persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

6that ITU workshops be held to inform about the progress in the work and the results achieved by the study groups in charge of ICT accessibility before the next world telecommunication standardization assembly,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to report to the ITU Council on the implementation of this resolution;

2 to contribute to the development of an ITU‑wide 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 standards-making process and to raise awareness within ITU‑T of the needs of persons with disabilities;

3 that ITU‑T employ the technical papers FSTP-AM "Guidelines for accessible meetings" and FSTP‑ACC-RemPart "Guidelines for supporting remote participation for all", as appropriate, to make it possible for persons with disabilities to be able to attend ITU meetings and events;

4 to encourage the development of ITU‑T Recommendations within study groups aimed at providing ICT and assistive solutions covering a wider range of disabilities,

invites the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Development Bureau, taking into account JCA-AHF, in particular concerning awareness and mainstreaming of telecommunication/ICT accessibility standards, reporting findings to the Council as appropriate;

2 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with ITU‑D, in particular developing programmes that enable developing countries to implement services that enable persons with disabilities to utilize telecommunication services effectively;

3 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other standardization organizations and entities, in particular in the interest of ensuring that ongoing work in the field of accessibility is taken into account, in order to avoid duplication and facilitate the exchange of best practices and promote efficiency in the development of standards and norms related to accessibility of telecommunications/ICTs;

4 to work collaboratively, cooperatively and closely with disability organizations in all regions to ensure that the needs of persons with specific needs are taken into account in all standardization matters;

5 to continue JCA-AHF, and any other accessibility coordination functions and advisory function within ITU‑T, in order to assist the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau in reporting the findings of the review of ITU‑T services and facilities;

6 to consider using accessibility resources in the meetings organized by ITU‑T in order to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the standardization process, with the aim of facilitating their access to and participation in the development of standards and regulations, thus ensuring more inclusive and equitable representation;

7 to consider the possibility of organizing, jointly with ITU‑D and with the involvement of other standardization organizations and entities, coaching and training for developing countries on working with disability organizations;

8 to identify and document examples of best and good practices for accessibility in the field of telecommunications/ICTs for dissemination among ITU Member States and Sector Members, and to share knowledge and successful experiences, thus facilitating the adoption of effective measures to promote the accessibility of telecommunications/ICTs;

9 to review the accessibility of ITU‑T services and facilities, and consider making changes, where appropriate, pursuant to UNGA Resolution 61/106, on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and report to the Council on these matters,

instructs the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

1 to revise the guide for ITU study groups: Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations;

2 to consider how study groups can facilitate, in their respective work, the effective implementation of new software, services and proposals that enable all persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to use telecommunication/ICT services, and relevant guidelines for end‑user needs, in order specifically to include the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and to update the guide on a regular basis, based on contributions from Member States and Sector Members, as well as the ITU‑T study groups, as appropriate, to reflect progress in accessibility,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to consider developing, within their respective national legal frameworks, guidelines or other mechanisms aimed at improving the accessibility, compatibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services, products and terminals;

2 to encourage relevant telecommunication/ICT stakeholders to adhere to respective developed national guidelines and other pertinent mechanisms, as considered above;

3 to support the introduction of services or programmes, including telecommunication relay services[[2]](#footnote-2)2, in order to enable persons with hearing and speech disabilities to utilize telecommunication services that are functionally equivalent to telecommunication services for persons without disabilities;

4 to support the introduction of telecommunications/ICTs, including new and emerging technologies, in order to enable persons with a wide range of disabilities, including mobility and cognitive disabilities, to access telecommunication/ICT services that are functionally equivalent to telecommunication/ICT services for persons without disabilities;

5 to participate actively in accessibility-related studies in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector, ITU‑T and ITU‑D, and to promote the effective representation of persons with disabilities in the standardization process so as to ensure their experiences, views and opinions are taken into account in all the work of study groups;

6 to encourage persons with disabilities to use telecommunication/ICT products and services in their daily and working lives;

7 to consider designating focal points for the implementation and monitoring of this resolution, in order to enable its effective application and monitoring;

8 to encourage the provision of differentiated and affordable service plans for persons with disabilities in order to increase the accessibility and usability of telecommunications/ICTs for these persons;

9 to encourage the development of applications for telecommunication products and terminals to increase the accessibility and usability of telecommunications/ICTs for persons with visual, auditory, verbal and other physical and cognitive disabilities;

10 to encourage regional telecommunication organizations to contribute to this work and to consider implementing the results achieved in the study groups and the workshop on this topic;

11 to encourage the development of accessibility features for audiovisual content of websites and online meeting systems;

12 to encourage industry to consider accessible features when designing telecommunication devices and services.

1. 1 These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 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 called communication assistants. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)