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TOGETHER FOR AN #ACCESSIBLE WORLD

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>> MODERATOR: Hello, everyone. Your excellency, distinguished panelists, participants, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the WTDC-17 pre-events, Together for an #Accessible World.

I'm chief of the Department for the structure enabling environment and ICT applications in the telecommunication development bureau of the international telecommunication union.

As you can see, we have an excellent panel lined up for you today, and the very capable moderator, whom I will introduce shortly.

We are very excited about this panel. As you may know, BDT has developed a portfolio of services and activities to support ITU members to implement ICT accessibility policies and practices in their own countries, and we know that many of our distinguished panelists have found that the BDTs, ICT Accessibility Resources have enabled them to take complete actions to implement ICT Accessibility Policy.

Of course, we were only able to develop these resources based on the policies, regulations, and practices developed by other countries that are also present on this panel today.

We are therefore delighted to have with us today Member States that were able to develop their own National ICT Accessibility Policies and implement web accessibility practices based on the ITU Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report, the BDT

Accessibility Training Program, Internet for All, the ITU Academy online course of public procurement of accessibility ICTs, and develop the ICT Accessibility Center.

In addition, ITU has been work together for an accessible world through the ITU-D study group question 7/1 on ICT Accessibility. We have a number of members of that team with us today. Their leadership ensured that the work of the study group focused on building members capacity and raising their awareness on ICT Accessibility.

Please now allow me to introduce our very capable moderator Ms. Roxanne McElvane Webber the Chair of ITU Study Group 1. A tireless advocate for ITU accessibility and, Roxanne, the floor is yours.

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm very pleased to moderate this panel. As you can see we have a group of a distinguished panel that have come to share the ways they promote accessibility in their individual countries. We have them list according to the ITU way, according to country, alphabetically, and so without further ado, I would like to just share a little bit about each one of them, just really their titles.

First, we have Mr. Hugo Miguel. We have Mrs. Amelia Odobasic, Head of Public Affairs for the Communications Regulatory Agency from Bosnia-Herzegovina. We are going to hopefully welcome very soon, the President of Brazil. We have Mrs. Aihua Wang, Chief Engineer for Planning and Design Research Institute, and we have Mr. Manuel Emilio Ruiz Gutierrez the President of SUTEL Council, Super Intendencia de Telecomunicaciones. I need water -- sorry, I'm very dry. Sorry to have butchered your title like that. We have here (?) - We have Mr. Abdoulaye Dembele, the Chief of Product from SOTELMA in Mali. We have Mrs. Blanca Glonzales the Ministry of Tourism from Spain, and my own Commissioner Mr. Brendan Carr from the Federal Communications Commission in the United States. Please welcome the guests, please.

(Applause).

So, I just wanted to let everyone know that what we will do is allow the speakers, maybe two of them to speak at a time to give their presentations to you about what they're doing in the countries and then we will ask for you to have questions, and then at the end of all of the presentation, we'll open up the floor for questions and comments.

So please be enthusiastic, don't hold back your questions. We want this to be an interactive session and we don't want everyone to just be staring at everyone through this whole time.

We will also have some remarks from the direct Director of the BDT at some point, I believe earlier in the meeting rather

than late, and at that point, it's going to be kind of a little shift, but I'm sure that we can all manage it. There will be a group photo at that time.

And then we'll continue on with the program. Okay. So, let's just roll with the punches here.

So, I just -- I guess the people here who have taken out their time to come to a pre-event and who are here in the room now already have some familiarity with accessibility issues, but you all know that back in 2006, the UN adopted its convention on the rights of persons with disability, and I think it was a good rallying point for our context. Of course, you will hear that a number of these countries have taken actions long before 2006 to, to ensure that there is inclusivity in their communities, but it was good for the UN to have that rallying cry for the world so that we all recognize the importance of including everyone and allowing all people to share their gifts and intellect and comradeship with the rest of the world.

So, without further ado, I'm just going to turn the panel over to you, if you would grace us and go first. Thank you.

>> Yes, okay. I will to introduce you to the situation of the inclusion activities in Argentina. Argentina has 5.1 million people with (?) of limitation. There is 12.9% of the country total population is impacted in 30% of the households. 60% with disabilities, partial of total, 24% is moderate disability, 8.3 is hearing disability, and 8.4 is cognitive disability.

We have in the framework, basically the National Convention of Rights with Persons with Disabilities, and the National Act 26.378 of 2008, and so we have an inclusion roundtable that is led by the vice-president and it's a group of entities of the country and part of governmental associations that are working and looking at this problem.

Some of them are the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Culture, the National Institute of Technology, the Commission of for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, and some organization for the sectors that integrate (?) and EI. The companies that we have in the roundtable from the government to discuss about the disabilities.

The idea of this -- the idea of this table is to balance skills between the people giving all the same opportunities to people the same access to information.

Basically, all of the activities that we are encouraging are oriented to bring the people the opportunity to sort the different stages that we have with our different disabilities because all of us have different problems and we need to solve those problems to allow the people to access to the knowledge and be part of the decisions.

Basically, we are not doing things by ourselves. We are looking for initiatives in different parts of the country, in universities, organizations, companies, enterprise, and we are looking the way to mix all the efforts to obtain the fast-track to obtain the goals to provide the people the solutions to the problems that they have.

In that case, here we talked some -- some experiences happen in some university, and we found that all the initiatives that the people are developing to solve the problems for persons are based on necessities related with communication from one person to another. How the solve the problem of communication, basically, how is the way to solve the problem to contact the people that we love.

For example, some of the projects that I was mentioned to you was based with the idea to talk to a friend to return to communicate with the grandmother or with the grandfather or a friend who had an accident, and so it's very important and all the activities related with these kind of problems or situations.

We are trying to cover all concerning the participation of the people in different activities in the country related with the new digital economy. The idea is to provide training for employees in companies to accept people that can offer different skills, inclusion and coaching a person or persons with disabilities and generation of new job positions.

The second stage is to develop the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and we are promoting challenges with the possibility of solution for the employment market technology ability, and complement of intellectual products likes Internet of Things, robotics application, intelligence, and to help to fund in projects to go from the prototype to the prediction and introduce the market of the new applications and products.

We are looking for economic sustainability, looking for investors of these projects, provide background in management and coaching, and help to disseminate the information that the new research is providing, and help to creating and introduce the products in the international market.

Working with our ministries we are working in education for disability, inclusive places for one project run by the Ministry, and 11,000 people we are implementing programming to develop a software with the opportunity to solve the different issues that we have with the inclusive problems. Educators for inclusive courses, and we are producing materials and content. We are looking for educational positions. We are working together with parent, associations, and non-governmental organizations, and help in the dissemination of activities.

In the actions that we have indicated related with us, we

have one problem in the inclusive cure, looking for alternative communication devices to eliminate the communication barriers for deaf, blind, cognitive difficulties. Magnetic loop to amplify the sounds, the communication barriers for hearing impaired, or the project is a project for predictive communications used to eliminate the communication barriers with people with aphasia. It is a process of conversion of print text to speech, and it is for blind persons, but that can support us to provide better excuse for teaching, and there is another project where we are encouraged to provide a solution for electrical (?) persons.

So, we are looking to integrate all of that works in order to provide the steps in the beginning to solve the problems of people. We can digitize a lot of things, we can produce a lot of devices to solve the gap that we can have in to access information, but we need to maintain our human skills because we can't digitize the heart. We can't digitize the feelings, and we can't digitize the love that we need to give to the other persons. Okay.

>> Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> Thank you very much.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Would you like to come forward and give some remarks? I can bring this if you would like to stand.

>> Hi, good afternoon, Roxanne. Good afternoon to all of you. This is a session for all of us. Sorry I was not here at the very beginning of the session because I'm disabled, and when you take out that, they can't recognize you any longer. I am disabled, and there is no clear line between those who are disabled and those who are not disabled. It's a continuous process. So, I'm very happy that you could join us today here to discuss this important issue, and actually this is one of the most important issues in the work of BDT because we need to make sure that whatever we do, that digital inclusion is there.

The inclusion in the society is there and just one where we can make a big difference in the lives of people, a big difference in the life of elder people, a big difference in the life of your own people who and we more and more with the technology are losing sight because of the ways of using technology and all of those issues are brought about by development and we need to solve it, so I don't want anything to add to that. I'm happy to be here and I would like to thank you very much for taking very seriously this issue with these issues at the heart of work of ITU-D. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

(Speaking off mic).

>> Very efficient. That's the quickest ITU picture I've ever taken in my life.

(laughter).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much, once again for your remarks, and what we will do is go proceed along the panelists, again, going according to alphabetical order, and so I'd like to introduce Mrs. Amelia Odobasic once again. We know that she's Head of Public Affairs for the Communications Regulatory Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but she also led, along with one other co-rapporteur, the work of the member states and sector members and ITU members on this issue of producing a report that is going to be presented at WTDC when we get to that part of the agenda.

You all know that there are more than 100 countries that come to these meetings, and she's led -- she has a very great story and I can't wait for you to hear it because it's going to illuminate for you how when someone gets enthusiastic and can convince the regulators and policymakers what is possible in a country, and of course, the end result of that is a much more inclusive society.

The thing that we have to remember is, all of these projects that Mr. Miguel was talking about affect people. They help people to become more connected and more fulfilled in their life, and so without further ado, Amelia, I would like to turn the floor over to you.

>> AMELIA ODOBASIC: Thank you very much. It is my great honor to be here today, and thank you very much Mrs. McElvane Webber for a great introduction.

So, when we talk about Bosnia-Herzegovina, people usually expect to hear some remarkable results that we've achieved within a very short period that we reduced the figures and statistics when we talk about persons with disabilities, and I cannot present that today.

But what I can do, I can share, I think, our experience that has achieved much more and hopefully the figures will follow it in future and that is really through communication based on the knowledge based on the resources that was provided to us as a member by BDT by using the BDT tools and services. You know, I was able to go home after each of these meetings taking with me a bunch of the reports, all the policies, all the standards, everything written for us as the member, and I would look at the enactment first of all of the Communication Regulatory Agency and I would say, look, can we really do something in order to implement what has been created for us as the members?

Mind you, Bosnia-Herzegovina is just like any other

developing countries. When we talk about ICT accessibility, we face challenges, and they're really serious. I mean, I'll just give you one example. That is, when we talk about TV accessibility, TV and video programming accessibility. The percentage is around 1%, which means that if 1% of the programs that are available, you know, through the TV stations and other channels, it's just 1% is accessible. But possibly, there is possibility that persons with disability can access it.

It's not only Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it's also our neighboring countries. Their situation is really as serious as that, and so as you were told, I was really privileged to be able to -- to contribute to the work of the Question 7 of the Study Group 1 of ICT for persons with disabilities, and I was also privileged to contribute in drafting the final report, and especially when I came across all of these good practices and tools and services that were available to us.

So, we created -- well, let's say a team at the Communications Regulatory Agency, and we sort of like outlined the steps on what to do next.

The first step that we took was really to try to create the political will to let the government know that the problem exists and that we can help for the problem to be resolved, or we can contribute.

The next step was to get in touch with persons with disabilities. We, over the last year, we held many meetings with associations of persons with disabilities and as well as with our counterparts at the Ministry of Traffic and Communication, and within a year only, we managed to have the international policies and standards being incorporated into strategic documents that would help us as the regulator to create the legislation and to do something really in practice.

How we did that, well, besides regulation, in my full-time job, I'm also a communication specialist, and so mind you, it helps a lot to get yourself prepared and to learn a little bit of how to educate and how to influence the government, how to convince them.

Most importantly, it helped us a lot once we started creating Allies with associations of persons with disabilities, they recognized us as the key institution that is going to help them sort of like to really move forward.

We still haven't overcome the challenges in terms of Bosnia-Herzegovina still doesn't have a legally binding legislation, but hopefully we will soon.

Also, there is this problem when it comes to funds, you see. There are always problems. When we talk about there are certain services that should be implemented, the funds are the problems.

We were also lucky to be able to, again, and I really have to say that to the BDT support, to be a little bit more active on a regional level, and then we discovered that there are all -- there are so many technical solutions that are actually available free of charge that are not costing a lot. And then, you know, one of the challenges of the countries that -- the developing countries in Europe that sooner or later, we are on our way to access the European Union, so there are also a lot of funds and programs that would enable us to, you know, to apply to certain assistance or associations of persons with disability, but the key was really to communicate it, to create -- the create this partnership with all relevant stakeholders and to really try to, sort of like, implement it.

And the implementation is something that I would really like to bring to your attention, that you take it very seriously. Try to think about implementation cycles. Try to think about the steps of the implementation cycle, and they are not -- they're not extremely difficult. The first step in any implementation cycle of what, as I said, has been created for us as a member, has been written out, has been felt out for us and it is, first and foremost, think of creating political will, because the governments are the cornerstones of the successful implementations of policies and standards when it comes to ICT accessibility.

The next thing is what is really crucial for developing countries to do, once they create this with the governments, once they raise the awareness about the problem, is to be realistic. You see, as the developing country, we cannot unfortunately, compare ourselves to some other developing countries, and we cannot be like Spain, we cannot be like Argentina, so it's simply not possible.

But what is important, is it's important that the governments create the roadmap, a list of the -- at least the minimums requirements. But the most important thing is that they're going to be realistic and feasible and possible to implement.

The next thing in the implementation cycle that I would like to bring to your attention is the trainings, is the education. That is crucial for us. I was lucky enough that I represented the country on this particular issue, and I really say that I was -- I was just learning, you know. Even drafting and putting reports together, it was just like I was learning every day as I was working on each chapter. I was thinking wow, this is so great, this is so great. I spent so much time with the BDT staff who were always very helpful. I made the most of my visit when I came to Geneva to attend the meeting, et cetera, so it was all about my personal -- I really make the



most of the capacity building that was available to me.

And also, the training is crucial, you know, for us as developing countries. Training all stakeholders, including the government, you see. In certain area, when we talk about ICT accessibility, some governments are going to -- some countries are going to be more develop and some less developed. As I said in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it's really a big problem. It's not such a huge problem when we talk about mobile accessibility, but web accessibility is a huge problem, you see.

Once I started talking about my colleagues in other state institutions, once we started looking at the websites to see whether they're truly -- whether they meet all the international standards, you know, the situation is very boring, but we are working on that, and I'm sure that in the future we'll also be able to take advantage of the BDT building.

Last but not least, regional initiatives are crucial, you see, especially, when we talk about developing countries, small developing countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mind you, I mean, we are the country of 3.7 million people together, you see, but when we join in with our neighboring countries, you know, well it all adds up. The number goes up to around 20 million people, and so that is really something.

And so regional initiative is something that we put an emphasis on, we create it through ITU regional initiative, four countries joined in on digital inclusion, on accessibility for all, and I'm really looking forward to the next year because we are going to implement, we hope, you know, what puts down as expected outputs.

And I will finish my presentation by saying that what really made me think, you see -- again, as I was preparing to draft the report, you know, when I read about this wonderful -- this wonderful initiative, wonderful project called Accessible Americas, why can't we have something in Europe? Was my first thought. Why can't we have accessibility in Europe. We may be able next year to be able to push for the events next year that are going to put a stamp on the whole initiative, and I think we can proudly -- I think we'll able to report on the positive results that came out of this particular project.

I will stop here. I would be -- I look forward to your questions if there are any, and I would be very happy, you know, to share my experiences in more details, perhaps, on how we did certain things, how we reached out to the government, how we reached out to persons with disabilities, and how we managed to keep these communications continuous, which is key, and important how to keep enthusiastic about it.

My enthusiasm is maybe slightly down mainly because of the jet lag but I can talk about this for much longer. Thank you so

much for this wonderful opportunity to be part of this panel and among such esteemed panelists. Thank you.

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much, Amelia. She is very modest, and she left out of her story how she single-handedly convinced the legislature to undertake these issues, and I hope you will cover that when we come back to you.

I think it's very interesting and important, the multi-stakeholder way that both you and Argentina have gone about, you know, including people in the community of people who have disabilities and including all stakeholders. I think that's a very, very key point.

The only other point that I wanted to make early on is that, what we have seen, at least within the ITU, is that this is a subject that really does cut across all three sectors, and that the technical aspects of it, the specific standards by which people are manufacturing equipment are just as important as the policy, and I think that I would have to give credit to Andrea Sax who is not with us, because Andrea is an expert in the technical as well as the policy, and I think that this is the -- this topic, I think, has worked the best in the union in terms of cross-cutting and working well together, so I just wanted to make that point.

The last point I wanted to make is that you do, indeed, have a regional initiative proposal from both the CIS and European region, and so we see that she's being very modest, but I think that this is a subject that those regions are very committed to, and we know that the issue of persons with disabilities and emergency communications in terms of being able to reach them in those situations is very important to other region, and we have both the Americas and Asia Pacific Region that have regional initiative proposals on those two issues.

If I might, I'd like to call upon Mr. Juarez Quadros, the President of Anatel to please share with us your experiences.

>> JUAREZ QUADROS: Good afternoon. I would like to talk about the accessibility in Brazil. Brazil is one of the first countries to publish the telecommunication for people with disabilities in accordance with the Brazilian law from July 2015, which is -- Brazil (?) the people with disabilities, the name of the people in Brazil, is to allow the people with disabilities (?). In the creation of Anatel, of May 2016, the main for people with disabilities by Anatel, through the Anatel resolution of providers of telecommunication services, including mobile, Internet, telephone, and cable TV, in order to guarantee us equal access to services and the companies to people with disabilities. Through specific services, and through channels, communication imperative to people of Brazil Brazilians sign in law the name -- the language is Libras in Brazil and the document

translated into full access to Internet websites, and the service providers and the Association of Persons with Disabilities, to operating in the procedures and general accessibility resolution, the name (?) resolution, and the inspection procedure of Anatel property last July, 2017 which contains the technical details and implementation for others in the resolution.

The creation of the accessibility -- it is a comparative classification among the providers according to the accessibility actions promoted by them according to the (?) to be definitive by the agency of the Internet to improve the service provided to users of telecommunications services with disabilities, and they may even consider actions outside of the telecommunications sector and focus on the (?) through a person with a disability to what is the fulfillment of obligation. Thank you for your attention, and I wish to another information about I have in here that Mr. Jefsin is the access person who is present with me. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much for that presentation. It's nice to see that Brazil is taking action at a very high level very recently.

So, if I could, I'd like to just ask -- stop right now and ask if there are any questions or comments that people would like to make from the audience for the first three speakers?

I will ask a question of Amelia. Can you describe the experience that you had in -- I think, I was going to say that this is something that really highlights the ITU-D as the knowledge platform for members and others, and you had given it in your remarks a small rendition of the kinds of things that were happening at the legislative level? Would you mind just sharing with us your role and the reaction of the leaders that you have in your country?

>> AMELIA ODOBASIC: Thank you very much. Yes, well, first of all I have to say that I'm very lucky to be able to have access to the policymakers. Okay. Because in my full-time job as I have announced, I'm Head of the Public Affairs Department, and I take active part of the management and active part in really all the strategic meetings. And so, I use every single opportunity that I had with any meeting that were not specifically on ICT accessibility, but at any meetings I would say when we finish, well look, have you been aware that, you know, this particular issue -- or that ICT accessibility for persons with disability is really a challenge, and the situation is not only in Europe, and why there is this and that, et cetera, et cetera. And I have to say that the first reaction was, okay, you see every time I raise an issue that they felt

embarrassed that they were doing so little or nothing.

And so, I realized that that was a good, you know, a good space for me to maneuver and to try to, you know, somehow to try to proceed with what I believed should be included in the legislation framework.

So, I would immediately propose that basically, I prepare based on international practices and standards, you know, something that should be incorporated in the -- either the strategic policy documents or even in the legal framework; and frankly speaking, and as Mrs. McElvane Webber said, yes, it was my individual efforts before I created the individual allies and let's say the Ministry, which was very important for us. Six months later we had the strategic document, you know, the new document created with this particular paragraph on very specific provisions, which were regarding the ICT accessibility.

The funny part was that I was -- I was in Serbia which is our neighboring country, and I was delivering a training there, and I was sharing the same experiences I was probably talking, you know, the same as I am addressing you today.

And the lady from the Ministry of Telecommunication was present and then she stood up and said look, I'm embarrassed, Bosnia-Herzegovina has done so much and we should really do something in Serbia about this, you know.

So, the next thing they said, she said well look, we would really like to see, can you please send us something, whatever you proposed in your legislation framework, can we have that as well.

To be very honest, I didn't take that -- of course I said, yeah, but I didn't expect they were really going to do it. A couple of months later my colleague from Serbia said he was asked by the Ministry to defend that particular part and before we knew it, less than three months it was incorporated in the particular law, and so that's why -- I mean, these are the single efforts that we all need to make in order to create the network of people, and I think it's just like a ripple effect. We can just create. Really, we can contribute a lot.

Now, we are having very high expectations of this regional initiative, and we're already planning regional meetings, and the very important thing is that not all of my colleagues from the region could come to attend the meetings, et cetera, but it only takes one person, you know, to take this -- to have this goal that -- and wanting to create this network. And so, after each meeting, I address my colleagues. I don't wait for, you know, regionally I don't wait for them to come to me and say what was it? Now it's kind of a habit. Every time I come from a meeting, I send a brief, I send an email and link, and I say look, these are the reports you should read it, this is useful

and this and that, and that's how it goes.

You know, now everybody is really looking forward to, you know, to even you know, having a more formal communication incorporation on this particular issue.

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Great. Thank you so much. We see how it can catch fire and what kind of a difference it can make regionally because we expect the regional initiative to be approved here at WTDC, and we expect then that many, many more people around the world will benefit.

Next, I'd like to invite Mrs. Aihua Wang, the Chief Engineer of Planning and Design Research Institute. Please, you have the floor.

>> AIHUA WANG: Good afternoon, it's my honor to be here to share some information about some work that IT have done for accessibility, and yes, I'm not an officer from (?), but for ICT, we do some policymaking, supporting, and consulting kinds of work, and so my colleague may help to propose some policies and some kinds of work, and so today I'll try my best to give you some information about this kind of thing.

Yeah. First of all, I may have some numbers to show you the serious situation in China. As you see, China has the most population in the world, and at the same time, China is the most populated country with disability and aging population. Yeah.

You know, the total number of disabled people in China was more than 85 million, of whom about 40% were hearing impaired and visually impaired by the end of 2015. And also, China has gradually stepped into an aging society. Yeah. The number of elderly people over the age of 60 is about 220 million, counting for about 16% of the total population, and so the situation is really serious.

There were multiple sectors into China which may jointly drive accessibility. The general sector like China Disabled Persons Federation and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, yeah, they may do some leading work for all disabled people, but like the Office of the Central Leading Group or (?) Affairs and MIT many do some professional work on ICT accessibility. Yeah.

In recent years we can see on the policy level really some important parts and really some issues, including from the central government and also some professional like MIT and other sectors.

I can list some of them, just like the one issued in 2016, the National Information Development Strategy Outline, which said to speed up the construction of the administrative website information accessibility and encourage the public to provide personalized information services for the disabled persons.

And also, we can see that the China Disabled Persons Federation and the National Internet Information Office jointly

issues a guidance on strengthening the capability buildings of website accessibility.

And next, I will mainly focus on some works that MIT have done. Yeah. You know, MIT is responsible department to ICT development and also it will take role to improve information accessibility.

And the standardization aspects, we can see it really promotes standardization like technical requirements of Internet information service for visually impaired people, and also technical requirements of multimedia information processing for visually impaired people.

Those standards have been completed, and also, the MIT encourage and support industry associations and enterprises to actively participate in national and the international standardization activities for a person with disabilities. As in making the national standard yearly plan, those kinds of standards, we'll have the priority to be set up. Yeah.

And also, share some actions promoted by MIT. First, the action is started in 2013, named as Beautiful China, China the Administrative Information Accessibility Action, and yeah. I can see it's really has a fruitful result.

Here I can list some numbers. More than 500 government units have completed the construction of information barrier free public service platforms, and more than 30,000 administrative services and public service websites have achieved accessibility interoperability which affected more than 100,000 people, and the leading roles of this constructions, and China Internet Association was awarded some of WC prizes this year, yeah, 2017 in June by ITU. Yeah.

And, also some companies like air (?) and companies that have done a lot of things, but due to the time limit, I will not tell very carefully.

And also, by the end I will just tell some near future plan. Yes. First, we are going to build a propulsion mechanism and joint teams, jointly a mechanism carrying operators Internet companies and enterprises and working committee on disabled person, industry association and research institute, just like CST, there are two objects. First is to meet regularly for discussions and experience sharing. And secondary, to collect specific practices which could be vitally used or to be encouraged. And certainly, to do some statistics kind of work.

And by the end of this year, a (?) released by MIT together with China's Disabled Persons Federation, the guidelines, information conception supporting policies for eye sight, hearing, and speech disabled persons. And in these guidelines, some measures stressed are mainly focused on reductions of cost of information consumption of the disabled person, and promoting

the employment of disabled persons through information channels and improving the quality of information. -- information leaving of the disabled people.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much for those remarks. I know that your country has done a great deal of work in the technical standards area, and I think it's very gratifying to see, not only in the highly specialized work, but how now as we're having more smartphones that have accessibility features just, you know, built into them naturally. And this is always the trend, that a lot of the things that we have put in place initially for persons with disability, end up helping all of us. For example, the captioning. I know sometimes if I have to miss a little of the meeting, I can look back at the captioning and catch what I would have missed ordinarily.

I also think it's really important, your multi-stakeholder approach, in terms of involving the federations and the organizations of persons with disabilities as you are putting together all the things that your government is doing. I think this is a very, very good trend. So, we'll look to hear from you so we can ask you some more questions later on.

So, Mr. Manuel Ruiz, the President of the SUTEL Council in Costa Rica.

>> MANUEL EMILIO RUIZ GUTIERREZ: Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here and I thank the authorities and also ITU for letting me be here. I want to share with you the Costa Rican issues we face. Basically, it's a small country of people and we just opened up the telecommunications market nine years ago. And to be honest, our legislation, basically, covers all of these aspects. In other words, we just copy the legislation from many different countries and adjust it to our local conditions.

By that, what I mean is we took the best practices. I mean, being so late in opening the telecommunications market, it allows us to copy from experiences, learn from your mistakes, and try not to -- try to avoid them in Costa Rica.

Anyway, we have the legal framework. We have as a telecommunications regulator, also the responsibility to manage the Universal Service and Access Fund. This fund has very, very specific goals, and we need to cover the needs for very specific populations.

For instance, we're talking about students, elderly people, people with disabilities, households led by single women. I mean, they just take care of the households with no help. And also, indigenous populations, so those are the target populations.

And, the Costa Rican government has been supportive -- supportive of these initiatives at the highest

level. We all know that if we don't have the political support, it's very difficult to achieve our goals.

In that regard, Costa Rica has, from the second Vice-President, she's in charge of all of the social programs that the government has to support, and we as regulators have the National Development Telecommunications Plan, and that's the way -- the mechanism that the government has sent us the indicators that they want to be accomplished, to be achieved, at the end of the political -- at the end of the administration political term.

In other words, they said, what is it that they would like to achieve, and we as regulators and managers of the Universal Service Fund decide which projects or how to implement all of those projects.

In other words, we have established five programs. The first one is to bring the telecommunications to those areas that the market has not covered yet. In other words, we don't invest any cent in the profitability areas and the money comes from all the spectrum auctions that we have in the country that goes into these USF program.

Also, 1.5 percent up to 3 percent of the income of the telecommunications operator is also added to this particular fund.

Okay. The idea then is to cover the whole country with telecommunications. Basically, telecommunications are available for all people no matter where they live. How about the household, they don't have the income, the proper income to afford the services, the telecommunications services that they need? Well, our second program, basically subsidizes the monthly Internet fee depending on the level of income of each household.

For instance, we are subsidizing 40, 60, and up to 80 percent of the Internet service, the monthly fee, and the computer, a laptop computer for each household.

We also provide in schools, high schools, small medical units throughout the country that used to be called Internet Cafes where the people go there in every single community to learn about ICT with equipment, and so we provide equipment that the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science Technology and Telecommunications they give us the specifications and we provide it through the program. That's the third program.

The fourth one is Connected Public Spaces, WIFI for the population depending on if there are students, they may be receiving two hours of free in parks, in areas that the communities gather for whatever the reasons, in tourist areas, or the central park of the community or whatever.

And the final project is the Rule Education Network, we are connected with the 5,000 schools that we have in Costa Rica, 25



percent of them, basically 1,250.

The rest are being covered by other initiatives from the government like the Ministry of Education is covering 50 percent of them and some other initiatives.

With that in mind, we have apparently all the initiatives, but when we come to think about the households with people with disabilities, we found out that we needed the know-how.

We,, basically, established within the law a connected country, but we didn't have the knowledge itself in order to connect special needs or solve the special needs that those families have, and that's what we found within the process and they start talking about with organizations like the organization that takes care of people with disabilities in Costa Rica, and they shared with us the specifications of computers hardware in order to satisfy the needs of people in this particular population.

Then the Internet Cafe, which we call the Connected Center, all of them have now special computers for people with disabilities.

The connected household program, is the goal is to connect 140,000 homes. Right now, as of this moment, we have connected almost 30,000 households, and we found out that 9,000 people out of those homes have some sort of disability.

So, we are satisfying the needs for or solutions providing for these families, but we found out that the government itself didn't have all the websites prepared for this type of population, and so what we have is getting in touch with ITU, and last March we have a training program in Costa Rica that would receive through people from ITU, and they trained the University of Costa Rica, the academic partner of ITU, and they converted the institution to certify websites from the government. In other words, if they aren't accessibility, if they meet the standards, then they receive some training, five days on site, and then there is two months of online training as well. And once the institution is certified and the website complies with all the requirements, the materials from ITU are at their disposal in order for them to replicate the training.

This is good because we have (?) mandating what to do, but we didn't know how to do it, and why reinvent the wheel if there are other organizations with ITU, and we thank them because they shared the knowledge and the Costa Rica is already in the process of advancing, and with the support of Ministry of Science and Technology which established a requirement for all the government sites that they need to be accessibility for people with disabilities.

And my last comment, before giving up the floor, is this coming November, November the 21, 22, and 23, Costa Rica is

hosting an event that ITU has already organized for in countries like Argentina, Brazil, and last year in Mexico, Costa Rica is really proud to host an America, or Accessible America, November, 21st through 23rd in November, and the idea is to have this event seminar for policymaking people, and how to basically learn about how to do -- how to deal with this type of situation, so we are -- all of you are kindly invited to join us in Costa Rica the third week in November. Thank you so much.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much. I think your point about implementation is really important, and I have observed that a lot of the model accessibility laws in various laws have been out there for at least 8 or 10 years now, and that's something that we're hearing from a lot of people, is that the laws there, the policies are there, but we need to find out how exactly we implement them.

So, I think that the Americas, if I may say that, has been a model with the -- with these Connect Accessibility events have helped to spread the word, have helped to push out the knowledge platform, and have helped to benefit a lot of people as a result.

So, now we're going to do a little something different. We're going to shift to another language, French. The Chief of the eHandicap Project, so we're going to ask him to kindly translate for us, and so we know that since you all work together, I understand that this is your boss here, so you're going to be on your best behavior.

If you can just give us three or four sentences, and then we can have Mr. Kanate to translate. Thank you, please, you have the floor.

>> (Speaking French).

Afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm very happy to be here today, and being part of this panel, I would like to say thank you to WTDC and all the people trying to put everything together so we can be here to talk to you today.

(Speaking French).

I would like to share our experience, which is especially based on the takeaway from ITU meetings and seminars. What is very important to mention is that we put -- there is a strong political will behind our strategy, and we're looking at the figures, we are 22 million people, and applying the figures from the UN nations, the United Nations which is 15 percent of people living with disabilities, this comes to about 6 million. If we try to put all of this, it goes to 9 million, which is a lot of people and we cannot afford to live out of the development.

(speaking French).

Okay. Everything is based on our vision, the vision of the

president, which is to make it one of the countries by 2020, and based on that we have to work on the legal framework first. We passed several laws supporting the development of accessibility of disabled people.

(speaking French).

Okay. A strong political win, what we have done is that the president set up a ministry dedicated to the digital world, which is called Ministry of Digital Economy, and we worked on the legal framework and the institution as well. We put some structure to make sure the universal service and the accessibility component of digital development are taken into account.

We also put in place what we called the (?), which is a free tax area and try to encourage and foster companies to come and set up their base in this area, and try to get benefit of the digital advantage.

(speaking French).

We set up what we call the eHandicap Program which is made of a lot of small projects, and also capacity building for people, for the consumers as well, to raise awareness regarding the situation of people living with disabilities.

On the legal framework as well, we got the regulation, which is really trying to care about what the government can do to help people with disabilities access to the digital services.

We are also working on other figure, and all the companies which are interested in coming are welcome, and we have tried to give them some benefit from the tax-free area.

(speaking French).

One of the key projects we have is that we will put in place a chart, a chart between the government and all the operators. It's very -- I would say it's voluntary, we will call the operator to come and sign that chart, in which they will commit to take into account the disability aspects in all the services that we will have to provide.

(speaking French).

We also believe that IoT could play a real role in supporting the accessibility. The reason why we had some similar with one of the biggest players on the satellite service to build appear community in the country around the IoT, but especially dedicated to promote services for disabled people.

(speaking French).

Okay. There are many challenges we're facing in terms of equipment. We are looking for an equipment supplier. In some country like the United States, when you are blind or deaf, you can buy what you need to help you maybe get it your way. That is not in our country. The reason we need an equipment supplier. And also, a service supplier for people with disabilities, and

we're not seeing it as a philanthropic matter. Like we said, 9 million people out of 22, which is more than a third of our people, if you take it to China world, it would be much more and the reason why we're seeing it like a niche for business people, not only philanthropy but people with try to address the issues of this nation, and we thank you for your availability and giving us the opportunity to -- the opportunity to address this assembly. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much. We appreciate your enthusiasm, and very, very coherent presentation. I hope there are some French speakers in the room because there were lots of nuggets in his presentation.

So, we are going to do this French situation one more time.  
(Laughter).

And then I guess we'll just wing it when it comes time for questions because they have very good information to present.

So, I would like to introduce Mr. Abdoulaye Dembele, Chief of Product and well known to many of us because he's been working on this for decade, and he's going to share some of the events that have happened in his own country of Mali.

(speaking French).

>> ABDOULAYE DEMBELE: (speaking French).

He's saying from policy to implementation, it's an important step forward and we can see in particular the result that this has on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

(speaking French).

So, in the case of Mali in 2012, we implemented a Multifunctional Center for people with disabilities that includes people who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, or mobility impaired at the Headquarters of the Association of EIHD which is the employment integration of the Disabled for Development.

(speaking French).

Okay. So, this organization that was created in 1992 that has the main purpose of the socioeconomic and professional integration of persons with disabilities, that organization now has more than 1,500 active members, 639 of whom are women with 70 percent youth, and its headquarters are in Bamako but also represented in 12 other cities in Mali.

Okay. So, the center is equipped with 6 -- with 6 computers and two of these are equipped with Braille for visually impaired persons, and there is also an HP computer that's equipped for people that are hard of hearing or deaf people. There are 7 computers in the facility for people with disabilities who do not have arms to manipulate the keyboard, and there is a printer

for Braille and an ordinary printer and scanner.

(speaking French)

Also, education is key. The center also has two highly experienced trainers, not only in ICT educational technology, but also capacity building for persons with disabilities so that they can achieve the appropriate assistance and training to learn how to use the technologies that can help them overcome their disabilities.

(speaking French).

So, as a result, I would say that this center has facilitated access to education and information, and even to small job opportunities, and overall social inclusion of several persons with disabilities from Bamako who without in center would never have the possibility to access information, learn, and have access to job opportunities in order to be self-sustaining.

(speaking French).

This center has served as a model for implementing similar ones in other cities in Mali.

(speaking French).

And finally, what I want to stress is that the creation of this center was a small telephone in terms of technological and financial investment, but a huge one for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

We can all testify about the power of accessibility ICTs as an enabler not only to access for information, but access to education, job opportunity, and thus socioeconomic inclusion of persons with disabilities. Thank you.

(speaking French).

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much, Mr. Dembele. I also important to hear from projects on the ground and I know you've been involved for a very long time. We'll look forward for hearing questions very, very soon. Do we have questions we want to ask now while we have the French interpreter's memory of what they've said? Anything about the projects, the eHandicap Project or the centers in Mali? Okay. We'll proceed on then.

So next we have Ms. Blanca Glonzales, Head of International Relations, served as Vice Chair for Study Group 1 and was very invaluable in that capacity. Blanca?

>> BLANCA GLONZALES: Thank you very much. I would like to thank you the ITU for organizing this panel, and especially thank the host country, Argentina and this wonderful City of Buenos Aires.

As the moderator expressed, the nature of this accessibility issue is very important, and my presentation is

really on these. I took examples of the involvement of different stakeholders in society to ensure we are on the way to an inclusive society. Being from the government, I will start with a legislation, the legislation framework. I will give an example of the most recent events, the European union Directive on Web Accessibility, a directive approved at the end of last year, and it applies to all the European countries and to -- it is requiring from us to have the government website accessible as well as the (?)

We consider the Internet is an essential way to access and provide information and service, and so the people that cannot access the information on the website are excluded from society, and we are focusing on inclusion.

So, prior to this directive, Spain already had a legislation, not for the apps but for the websites, and in order to ensure that the administrations had their websites accessible, we already established the observatory. It's observatory, the website is accessibility observatory, and this is a very important tool that was developed by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Administration, and it helps also the regional -- not only the central government, but the regional government, the local government when designing -- when they have the design the websites and the apps.

And there is -- they have in these observatory, there are tools for periodic evaluation on the level of success of the accessibility of the website, and there we have two accessibility standards that they can use as a guideline to make sure that they comply with the accessibility.

Also, in the accessibility, we draw statistics, and so we could see from the progressive increase on the compliance of the accessibility requirements from the public -- from the public websites.

Besides the legislature part, we also have a number of government agencies that are very much focused on the accessibility issue. One example is that there is a center to promote an inclusive society, and it is a part of the Ministry of Health and Social Service from Spain, and they develop -- the institute for people -- let's say for the elderly, although I know this is not the word, the official word, but this is more -- this institute is a part of the Institute for the Elderly that we have in Spain and they provide all sorts of different tools to make accessibility for everybody. And they are not going to very expensive equipment, but they also have the very basic training -- let's say, for all the people that deal with people with disabilities, very basic training, and then they do these very basic things.

Like for example, they developed this little thing for

people with a lot of -- with difficulty in using their hands, that they can switch on and switch off the television. That's just an example, but with little finance resource, you can achieve a lot and with the commitment and the drive.

And, it was this Institute for this inclusiveness, they organized every year an International Week, and it's through this week that the ITU was represented, Mrs. Roxanne, she attended and she encouraged Spain. She encouraged us to attend this very important panel, and also because we are in a region where a lot -- many countries speak Spanish, so they can also benefit from what I am now explaining.

And just to mention that Spain will be representing the chairman of these Institute for Accessibility is going to be -- is going to be in the Accessibility American events that will take place next month in Costa Rica.

I would like to say also, as an example of the involvement of academia, we have the University at a distance and they have courses online, and they are free of charge, and they are in Spanish and they are a good tool to teach people how to make more universal access to the Internet.

For instance, they have a course on universal design, and they have another course on public procurement, and if any of them people here want to have more information as a website that I am talking about, please feel free to contact me any time.

And I would like to also give an example of the involvement of the private sector, for example, for Telefonica that is also here, they have the TV or movies and series, they are in subtitles and sign language, and they are also very active in promoting accessible phones for everybody.

And, finally, since we are in the ITU environment, I would like to say that the Spain is very much involved in the work of the ITU regarding accessibility, not only in the Question 7.1 and accessibility that we have a very good representation here, that we provided the contributions and we think it is one of the most important issues to be dealt with.

We also, as Madam Roxanne pointed out, the other sectors are also very much involved, and so we are active in in the group, the sector group of the standardization and the communication of audio visual accessibility which is very important for accessibility of the television, and Spain has presented several contributions on projects that that are universities are doing on access systems to facilitate the accessibility of the television to everybody. And, I would like to thank all of the participants here and to everybody. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much, Blanca.

Last but not least, progressing down the alphabet, we finally come to you, United States, so representing our country is Commissioner, Branden Carr. I would tell you a lot about his background, but because we're doing only countries, we're not going to brag on any of the very, very distinguished people here, but Commissioner Carr, you have the floor.

>> BRENDAN CARR: Thank you very much. I want to thank the ITU for convening this panel. It's a very important topic, and I also want to mention that it's a great honor to appear on this panel with the distinguished panelists, and I've already personally learned a lot from the best practices and approaches that other countries are taking. And it's just heartening to see both ITU, the countries here, and globally the commitment that we have to accessibility.

As we've already heard, I think, there is really no higher purpose in terms of expanding access, expanding broadband deployment to ensure that we're doing that for everybody, for every community regardless of disability, and it's great to see every country really prioritizing this effort.

You know, at its core, it really is about equality, about ensuring independence for everybody, about freedom of access for everybody. In the United States, we have a number of Federal laws that go to this point, the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990. Most recently in some respects, we have a law passed in 2010 that is much more focused on telecom as well and accessibility.

In terms of how I want to talk about this, there is a couple of different strategies that we've been using in the U.S. of how to achieve accessibility.

One bucket has to do with rules, requirements; another bucket has to do with incentives that we can create to encourage greater accessibility, and the third is just some trends and some policies.

On the rules side, we have a number of requirements as other countries do for accessibility that starts with hearing aid compatibility for wired-line phones and wireless phones. Like we've heard, if you look at hearing difficulties alone, there is about 30 million people in the United States that have some sort of hearing disability, so we have requirements that ensure that cell phone, regular phones work with hearing aids.

We also have requirements about web browsers on mobile phones being accessible and requirements for closed captioning and other requirements as well, and so we have a whole list of rules and requirements that the FCC has put in place.

The second bucket that I wanted to talk about is what I consider incentives. That can come in a lot of different forms to encourage competition in the accessibility space.



One of those is labeling, which seems maybe like an odd incentive, but when you put front and center on your product, on your websites, but principally product, the accessibility qualities on it, you see a couple of things. First, consumers know if it's going to work for them, you don't purchase a product and have it not work and frustrations with that. Second, when you have labeling on the products itself, I find in the U.S. experience, you encourage competition among providers to ensure that they have the most accessible products that are out there.

Another step the Commission has taken in the incentive category is awards and honors. We have a number of competitions within the U.S. The FCC has been part of recognizing and giving awards to innovators in the accessibility space.

For instance, we recently recognized an app that was developed that's designed to -- an app on your phone, to give live -- or captioning of live conversations. We recognized those efforts.

Other apps and developments that we've recognized with awards have been image recognition, and this is an important area that we're in because machine learning plays a big role in this that images can be identified automatically and then translated either in terms of written or orally to what it is that the image is.

Another sort of incentive-type piece that we have is something that the agency calls the Disability Advisory Committee, and this is essentially, we bring together a wide group of stakeholders in the disability community, and they have a formal advisory committee role at the agency. They meet regularly, they try to reach consensus on issues, and they can present recommendations as a group to the commission that the agency itself can then take up.

In another piece of the incentive, it's obviously going to be funding. One piece that the U.S. does there is we have a fund, 10 million dollars U.S. annually that can be used for the purchasing of accessibility equipment for training and for other qualifying purposes.

And so, the final bucket that I wanted to touch on today has to do with trends and policy, and one thing that I'm very interested in, and I think that you're seeing in the U.S. as well is attempting to move away from, what can be, expensive standalone devices, and how do we incorporate accessibility more uniformly in off-the-shelf devices.

One way we're able to do that is when you move -- when you make the IP transition, and an example there is for decades we had something called TTY, which were expensive standalone devices that you would plug into the system, and now we're

moving to be able to replace that with RTT, which is Realtime Text, essentially, an improvement on SMS-based text messaging, and we're seeing a lot of capability there in the accessibility community, so this is part, again, sort of a broader trend at the agency for how do we incorporate accessibility natively on devices in off-the-shelf devices.

A key piece of that, again, is to allow the manufacturers, the OTT providers room to innovate, and I think that's the trend that we're really seeing long term is getting this built in. We heard earlier the example of eye glasses and how that's curing what otherwise might be a disability, and I think it's important to look at technology and communications the same way. How can we get to something that is ubiquitous as off-the-shelf availability so that when people have disabilities are picking up their smartphone, picking up their laptop, they don't need to add on expensive devices, and so I think long term that's the trend we're looking to go it?

Again, it's wonderful to join this panel and I've already learned a lot. I really appreciate it.

(Applause).

>> ROXANNE McELVANE WEBBER: Thank you very much Commissioner Carr. I think one of the most important parts of that kind of mainstreaming will be affordability. It will be that these devices will be much more affordable for people.

We have about 30 seconds for questions. There must be somebody in the audience that has a question.

You all are hungry or jet lagged or whatever.

(laughter).

Okay. Well, I would like to give the panel an opportunity, if you had any questions, or if you wanted to make any final comments, maybe we could do that and go down the line. Have you really spent yourself -- this is what happens with the pre-event, we're all just tired and barely making it.

All right. I think that we've had some really, really good information. It sounded to me, from what I've been listening to, is that everything seems to begin with policy and the laws and winning over policymakers and leaders to lead the country in going forward.

We also had a lot of examples of multi-stakeholder consultation, which I think is very important for this constituency, and a lot of people have heard that slogan of "nothing about us without us" and for the persons with disabilities community, I think that when you're consulting with persons with disability, when you're consulting, we've heard about Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science, Ministry of Health, as well as the private sector, which is what I wanted to talk about, but I think we've run out of time.

We've talked about the need for statistics to be able to measure in the country, you know, who is doing what and how these devices and services are helping people, and have a baseline of who is in the country that needs these kinds of services.

We talked about the need for employment. I heard people mention that. I don't know if that was quite translated, but the ability for ICTs to help persons with disabilities find employment. I think was a very key issue.

Also, the whole public information campaign, other incentives, like the FCC's Chairman's Awards, and the Connect Americas, all of these kind of information campaigns. I think Amelia talked to us about how she was able to just single-handedly promote information and how information was able to help us, you know, achieve very good results in -- that we would never had absent those things.

And finally, I would just talk about two other points, and that was the need for training, I think, was emphasized, training on devices and training -- all of the stakeholders, including the government, including private industry, and as well as funding, and that universal service fund, in many ways, is being used to help to facilitate, not only the devices, but also training.

So, I'm rushing through that summary, but I hope that that helps you to kind of pull together everything that we've said here, but there is just such a wealth of information and experience here, and so we know that we're going to together change the world. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

There is coffee outside for people, so if you were too shy to ask your questions up here, you can approach all of them now while they're trying to fix their coffees. Thank you.

(session completed at 2:02 p.m. CST)

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