



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

# ITU-T

TELECOMMUNICATION  
STANDARDIZATION SECTOR  
OF ITU

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION  
ASSEMBLY  
Dubai, 20-29 November 2012

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## **Resolution 70 – Telecommunication/ information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities**

### ***CAUTION !***

### ***PREPUBLISHED RESOLUTION***

This prepublication is an unedited version of a recently approved Resolution. It will be replaced by the published version after editing. Therefore, there will be differences between this prepublication and the published version.

## FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications, 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.

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## RESOLUTION 70

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

*(Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012)*

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Dubai, 2012),

*recognizing*

- a)* Resolution 175 (Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication/information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities;
- b)* Resolution 58 (Hyderabad, 2010) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on access to information and communication technologies for persons with disabilities, including persons with age-related disabilities, and WTDC Resolution 70 (Hyderabad, 2010), on regional initiatives for Central and Eastern Europe on "E-accessibility (Internet and digital television) for persons with disabilities";
- c)* the mandate of and work carried by the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF), and in particular ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) actions to increase cooperation with other United Nations organizations and activities, as well as all United Nations specialized agencies, in order to raise awareness about ICT accessibility in the framework of standardization, and ITU-T actions aimed at upholding JCA-AHF;
- d)* studies under ITU-T Question 4/2 on human factors-related issues for improvement of the quality of life through international telecommunications;
- e)* studies under ITU-T Question 26/16 on accessibility to multimedia systems and services, including the recent Recommendation ITU-T F.790 on telecommunication accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities;
- f)* studies under Question 20/1 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) on access to telecommunication services for people with disabilities;
- g)* ongoing work in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) to bridge the digital disability divide;
- h)* publication by the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) of the Guide for ITU study groups – Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations;
- i)* the creation by ITU-T Study Group 2 of the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors for purposes of awareness, advice, assistance, collaboration, coordination and networking;

*j)* the mandate of and work carried out by ITU-T Study Group 16, the parent group of the Focus Group on Audiovisual Media Accessibility (FG-AVA), meeting the need to make audiovisual means accessible to persons with disabilities;

*k)* the activity carried out by the Internet Governance Forum Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) sponsored by the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) and the partnership between ITU-T and DCAD for the purpose of maximizing the benefits for all sectors of the global community of electronic communications and online information through the Internet,

*considering*

*a)* that Article 9, on accessibility, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP), which entered into force on 3 May 2008, provides as follows: "To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility";

*b)* that paragraphs (2)(g) and (2)(h) of the same article of the Convention requires that States Parties take appropriate measures:

*i)* 9(2)(g) "to promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet";

*ii)* 9(2)(h) "to promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost",

*considering further*

*a)* that the World Health Organization estimates that more than one billion of the world's population live with some form of disability; of these 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 over the past 60 years, the approach to disability adopted by United Nations agencies, and by many Member States (through a changed emphasis in their laws, regulations, policies and programmes), has moved from a health and welfare perspective to a human-rights based approach, which recognizes that people with disabilities are people first, and that society places barriers upon them as opposed to their disabilities, and which includes the goal of full participation in society by persons with disabilities (Resolution 175 (Guadalajara, 2010));

*c)* that maximizing the accessibility and usability of telecommunication/information and communication technologies (ICT) services, products and terminals through universal design will increase their uptake by persons with disabilities and older persons, and thereby increase revenues;

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

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

*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, ..."<sup>1</sup>;

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,

*taking into account*

a) WTSA Resolution 44 (Rev. Dubai, 2012), on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries and Resolution 57 (Rev. Dubai, 2012), on strengthening coordination and cooperation among ITU-R, ITU-T, and ITU-D on matters of mutual interest;

b) Resolution GSC-14/27 (revised), on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, agreed upon at the 14th Global Standards Collaboration Meeting (Geneva, 2009; Halifax, 2011), which advocates greater collaboration between world, regional and national standardization bodies as a basis for establishing and/or strengthening activities and initiatives concerning the use of telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities;

c) Resolution GSC-13/26 (revised), on user needs, considerations and involvement, agreed upon at the 13th Global Standards Collaboration meeting (Boston, 2008; Halifax, 2011);

d) publications and ongoing work of the Special Working Group on Accessibility of the Joint Technical Committee on Information Technology (JTC 1) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), ISO/IEC JTC1 SWG-Accessibility as well as the Mandate 376 project teams, in identifying user needs and in developing a comprehensive inventory of existing standards as part of the ongoing effort to identify areas where research or new standards work is needed;

e) the activities of the ITU-T study groups in charge of accessibility to ICTs: Study Group 16 (Multimedia coding, systems and applications), which is the lead study group on telecommunications/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, and Study Group 2 (Operational aspects of service provision and telecommunication management) for the part relating to human factors;

f) activities relating to the development of new standards (e.g. ISO TC 159, JTC1 SC35, IEC TC100, ETSI TC HF, and W3C WAI), and the implementation and maintenance of existing standards (e.g. ISO 9241-171);

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<sup>1</sup> Geneva Declaration of Principles §§ 13 and 30; Geneva Plan of Action §§ 9 (e) and (f), 12 and 23; Tunis Commitment §§ 18 and 20; Tunis Agenda §§ 90 (c) and (e).

- g) formation of the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT), a flagship partnership initiative of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UN-GAID);
- h) the joint ITU and G3ict release of the Report "Making TV Accessible," on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December 2011), and the report on "Making Mobile Phones and Services Accessible to Persons with Disabilities";
- i) various 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 Study Group 2, Study Group 16 and the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors shall continue giving high priority to work on the relevant Questions, in accordance with the accessibility guidelines, as shown in the Guide for ITU-T study groups – Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations facilitating the implementation of new software, services and proposals that enable all persons with disabilities, including persons with age-related disabilities, to effectively use telecommunication/ICT services, the ITU-T FSTP TACL Telecommunication Accessibility Checklist for standards writers and the Telecommunication accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities (Recommendation ITU-T F.790);

2 that ITU study groups draft proposals to achieve greater accessibility to telecommunications/ICTs, combining the drafting of non-discriminatory standards, service regulations and measures for all persons with disabilities, including older persons with age-related disabilities, with cross-cutting user-protection actions; to ask all ITU-T study groups to utilize the ITU-T FSTP TACL Telecommunication Accessibility Checklist, which makes it possible to incorporate the principles of universal design and accessibility;

3 that an ITU workshop 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 WTSA,

*invites Member States and Sector Members*

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

2 to consider introducing telecommunication relay services<sup>2</sup> to enable persons with hearing and speech disabilities to utilize telecommunication services that are functionally equivalent to telecommunication services for persons without disabilities;

3 to participate actively in accessibility-related studies in ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D, and to encourage and promote self-representation by 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;

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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 by human operators.

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

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

*instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau*

to report to the ITU Council on the implementation of this resolution,

*invites the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau*

1 to identify and document examples of best practice for accessibility in the field of telecommunication/ICT for dissemination among ITU Member States and Sector Members;

2 to review the accessibility of ITU-T services and facilities and to consider making changes, where appropriate, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/61/106, and to report to the ITU Council on these matters;

3 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) and the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), in particular concerning awareness and mainstreaming of telecommunication/ICT accessibility standards, reporting findings to the Council as appropriate;

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

5 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;

6 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with disability organizations in all regions to ensure that the needs of the disabled community are taken into account in all standardization matters;

7 to contribute to the development of an ITU-wide internship programme for people with disabilities who have expertise in the field of ICTs, to build capacity amongst people with disabilities in the standards-making process and to raise awareness within ITU-T of the needs of persons with disabilities;

8 to continue the accessibility coordination and advisory function within ITU-T to assist the Director of TSB in reporting the findings of the review of ITU-T services and facilities;

9 to consider using accessibility resources in the meetings organized by ITU-T in order to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in the standardization process,

*instructs the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group*

1 to revise the Guide for ITU study groups – Considering end-user needs in developing Recommendations,

2 to request study groups to facilitate, in their respective work, the implementation of new software, services and proposals enabling all persons with disabilities, including persons with age-related disabilities, to effectively use telecommunication/ICT services, and relevant guidelines for end-user needs, in order to specifically include the needs of persons with disabilities, and to update this guide on a regular basis, based on contributions from Member States and Sector Members as well as the ITU-T study groups, as appropriate.