

**20 June 2013**

**Communiqué**

**ITU's call to the High Level Meeting on Disabilities and Development:  
ICTs are instrumental to enable a disability-inclusive development framework**

**Geneva, 20 June 2013** — The Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in accordance with Article 14 (l) of the United Nations Resolution 65/186 and in the context of the 2013 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMDD), welcomes the opportunity to send a message concerning the important role that telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can play to enable a post-2015 disability-inclusive development framework.

The HLMDD presents an excellent occasion for the UN system to work together towards the achievement of the United Nations common goal: inclusive development and a society in which persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries.

ITU is the UN specialized agency for telecommunications and ICTs, with a global Membership that includes 193 Member States and more than 700 Sector Members and Associates. In accordance with Resolution 175 from the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Guadalajara, 2010), ITU is committed to assist in this effort and has already mobilized its Membership, as well as other relevant stakeholders to ensure that ICTs are accessible for persons with disabilities, and to promote access to ICTs to persons with disabilities.

With ICTs increasingly integrated into every aspect of the modern world, they have become a positive force of transformation and a crucial element of any institutional framework for inclusive development. ICTs can provide access to key public services, such as health, education and government services, with widespread implications on social, environmental and economic progress aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Based on this experience, ITU would like to invite the delegations participating at the HLMDD that will take place in New York on 23 September 2013 to acknowledge the key role that ICTs are already playing to promote the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities, and to consider including in the outcome document of the meeting specific recommendations to further expand access to ICTs to persons with disabilities, while addressing the barriers that may be limiting the benefit that these technologies may bring to this important group of the global population, which encompasses more than 1 billion persons worldwide.

The inclusion of such references in the outcome of the HLMDD should encourage all governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders, to be proactive and contribute to the work of the aforementioned organizations, and to implement the agreements reached within these organizations for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

Let's work together to achieve a disability-inclusive development agenda using all the opportunities currently available, including the transformational power of ICTs.

- (I) A/RES/65/186 "Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond"
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