

## RESOLUTION 175 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022)

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

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

*recalling*

- a)* Resolution ITU-R 67-1 (Rev. Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019) of the ITU Radiocommunication Assembly, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;
- b)* Resolution 70 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and the studies, initiatives and events on this issue undertaken by the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and its study groups, in collaboration with the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF);
- c)* Article 12 of the International Telecommunication Regulations, adopted by the World Conference on International Telecommunications (Dubai, 2012), which states that Member States should promote access for persons with disabilities to international telecommunication services, taking into account the relevant ITU-T recommendations;

- d)* the outcome document of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development convened by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the level of Heads of State and Government on 23 September 2013, under the theme "The ICT Opportunity for a Disability-Inclusive Development Framework", which stresses the need for inclusive development in which persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries;
- e)* Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with which all people, including persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, should have equivalent access to and use of ICTs;
- f)* that the Intersector Rapporteur Group on Audiovisual Media Accessibility, between the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) and ITU-T, is working on broadcasting and Internet television in order to include audio description for persons with visual impairments and captioning/subtitles for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as to include other persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in accessing remote Internet participation;
- g)* 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;
- h)* 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;
- i)* the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) special initiative work carried out through studies conducted within ITU-D Study Group 1 and the ITU-D initiative on the development of an e-accessibility toolkit for persons with disabilities, in collaboration and partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict);
- j)* the Kigali Declaration (WTDC-22),

*recognizing*

- a) the ongoing work of ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, including JCA-AHF;
  - b) technical papers addressing:
    - use cases for assisting persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs using mobile applications;
    - guidelines for accessible meetings;
    - guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all;
    - Telecommunication Accessibility Checklist;
- as well as Recommendation ITU-T F.791, on accessibility terms and definitions;
- c) that the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023 includes inter-Sectoral objective I.3: "Enhance telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs" and related outcomes and outputs;
  - d) the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), calling for special attention to be given to persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;
  - e) that, during the UNGA high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, it was recognized that special attention must be paid to solving the specific issues presented by ICTs for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;
  - f) § 13 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and § 18 of the Tunis Commitment, reaffirming the commitment to providing equitable and affordable access to ICTs, especially for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;
  - g) the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2019;

- h) various regional and national efforts to develop or revise accessibility guidelines and standards for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs applicable to telecommunications/ICTs;
- i) ITU's accessibility policy for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, adopted by the ITU Council in 2013;
- j) that webcasting using accessible webpages and documents, as well as the use of captioning and audio description in audiovisual content, and the use of sign-language interpretation, are invaluable tools which benefit persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs,

*considering*

- a) that the World Health Organization estimates that there are 1 billion persons living with varying degrees of physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities in the world, meaning 15 per cent of the world's population, and 80 per cent of them live in developing countries<sup>1</sup>;
- b) that ICTs can provide opportunities and benefits for women and girls with disabilities to overcome exclusion on the basis of their gender and disability;
- c) that Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), on accessibility, which entered into force on 3 May 2008, requires States Parties to take appropriate measures, including:
  - i) 2.(g) To promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;
  - ii) 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;

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<sup>1</sup> These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

d) that the United Nations Human Rights Council established the Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to allow identification of the barriers and obstacles that persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs still have to overcome to achieve their full, effective participation in society, the mandate of which will be to work in close coordination with all mechanisms and entities of the United Nations system, regional mechanisms, civil society and organizations of and for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and which will incorporate the perspectives of gender, international cooperation and capacity building in all its activities, in accordance with the principles of CRPD;

e) the importance of cooperation between governments, the private sector, civil society and relevant organizations to provide possibilities for telecommunications/ICTs that align with the principles of universal design, equitable access, functional equivalence and affordability;

f) that it is necessary for governments and multiple stakeholders to pay attention to the outcomes in the report jointly prepared by G3ict and Disabled People's International, given that the accessibility of the information infrastructure, considered an essential area of ICT accessibility that has an enormous impact on the greatest number of users, falls short of the level of progress called for by the provisions of CRPD in terms of general compliance on the part of the countries that have ratified it,

*noting*

that JCA-AHF was set up for the purposes of awareness-raising, advice, assistance, collaboration, coordination and networking, its historical precedence, and its role to communicate, cooperate and collaborate with all the Sectors on the work of accessibility to prevent duplication of work,

*resolves*

- 1 to involve persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the work of ITU, taking into account their experiences and expertise, so that they may collaborate in the adoption of a comprehensive action plan in order to extend access to telecommunications/ICTs, in collaboration with external entities and bodies concerned with this topic;
- 2 to foster dialogue and communication between persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs (with means of interpretation when necessary) and those who prepare public policies and statistics on telecommunication/ICT users, in order to obtain better information and knowledge about which data to collect and analyse at the national level using international standards and methods;
- 3 to promote cooperation with regional and global organizations and institutions that deal with accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, in order to include telecommunication/ICT accessibility in their agendas and take into account its cross-cutting nature with other topics;
- 4 to maximize use of accessible webcasting facilities, captioning (including transcripts of the captioning) and sign language and, if possible, within the financial and technical limitations of the Union, provide these services in all six official languages of the Union both during and after the conclusion of any session when convening conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union as articulated in Chapter II, Section 12 "Setting up of committees" of the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union;
- 5 to build on and consolidate past accomplishments by providing the necessary financial and human resources for the effective and sustained integration of ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs into development activities, within budgetary constraints,

*instructs the Secretary-General*

to bring Resolution 58 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in an effort to promote increased coordination and cooperation for development policies, programmes and projects for achieving ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, in line with principles of equitable access, functional equivalence, affordability and universal design, and fully enhancing the available tools, guidelines and standards, to eliminate obstacles and discrimination,

*instructs the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Directors of the Bureaux*

1 to coordinate accessibility-related activities between ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D, taking into account JCA-AHF and in collaboration with other relevant organizations and entities where appropriate, in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs are taken into account;

2 to consider the financial implications for ITU of providing, within the available resources, information in accessible formats and through ICTs, as well as access to ITU facilities, services and programmes for participants with visual, hearing or motor disabilities and persons with specific needs, mainly through the inclusion of captioning at meetings, sign-language interpretation, access to information through the ITU website in print and adapted formats, and physical access to ITU buildings and meeting facilities, and to facilitate the adoption of accessible ITU recruitment practices and employment;

3 pursuant to UNGA Resolution 61/106, to consider accessibility standards and guidelines whenever undertaking renovations or changing the use of space at a facility, so that accessibility features are maintained and additional barriers are not inadvertently introduced;

4 to consult and actively involve persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs and their representative organizations in the venue selection process for ITU conferences and events, to ensure that selected sites are accessible and enable inclusive participation;

- 5 to encourage and promote representation by persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs so as to ensure that their experiences and opinions are taken into account when developing and progressing ITU work;
- 6 to consider expanding the fellowship programme in order to enable delegates with disabilities and delegates with specific needs, within existing budgetary constraints, to participate in the work of ITU;
- 7 to identify, document and disseminate examples of best practices for accessibility in the field of telecommunications/ICTs among ITU Member States and Sector Members;
- 8 to work collaboratively on accessibility-related activities with ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D, taking into account JCA-AHF, in particular concerning awareness and mainstreaming of telecommunication/ICT accessibility standards, and in developing programmes that enable developing countries to introduce services that allow persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to utilize telecommunication/ICT services effectively;
- 9 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other relevant regional and global organizations and entities, in particular in the interest of ensuring that ongoing work in the field of accessibility is taken into account;
- 10 to work collaboratively and cooperatively with disability organizations in all regions to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs are taken into account;
- 11 to direct the regional offices, within their available resources, to organize regional competitions for the development of assistive technologies to enable persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, having due regard to differences in culture and language and taking into account the presence of developers with disabilities;
- 12 to make use of and share information regarding the ways in which ICTs can empower persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, for example guidelines, tools and information sources prepared by ITU and other relevant organizations such as G3ict which are of benefit to the work of ITU and the membership;



13 to encourage the regional offices, within their available resources, to cooperate with stakeholders concerned to promote the development of new technologies that empower persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

14 to consider and implement improvements to organizational culture and relevant internal systems to ensure that persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs are provided with equal opportunities in the recruitment and retention process;

15 to continue to support measures designed to build the capacities of ITU staff to understand and champion accessibility and disability inclusion through activities such as workshops and management training;

16 to submit a report annually to the Council and to the next plenipotentiary conference on measures taken to implement this resolution;

17 to promote the collection and analysis of statistical data on disabilities and telecommunication/ICT accessibility that Member States can consider when preparing and designing their own public policies to promote accessibility,

*invites Member States*

1 to develop, within their national legal frameworks, guidelines or other mechanisms to enhance the accessibility, compatibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services, products and terminals, and to offer support to regional initiatives related to this issue;

2 to encourage observation of the annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities through telecommunication/ICT activities related to accessibility,

*invites Member States and Sector Members*

- 1 to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs in the work of ITU, including in the composition of delegations to ITU conferences and assemblies and study group meetings;
- 2 to introduce appropriate telecommunication/ICT services and to encourage the development of applications for telecommunication devices and products in order to enable persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to utilize these services on an equal basis with others, and to promote international cooperation in this regard;
- 3 to promote the development of learning opportunities in order to train persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to use ICTs for their social and economic development, including through train-the-trainer courses and distance learning;
- 4 to participate actively in accessibility-related activities/studies in ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D, and JCA-AHF, including participating actively in the work of the study groups concerned, and to include and promote representation by persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs so as to ensure that their experiences and opinions are taken into account;
- 5 to foster coordination and consensus on ensuring that persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs have access to telecommunication/ICT services;
- 6 to share good and best practices implemented in favour of telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

7 to take into account *considering c) ii) and e)* above, and the benefits of cost affordability for equipment and services for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, including universal design;

8 to encourage the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund set up by ITU to support activities relating to the implementation of this resolution.

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*(Guadalajara, 2010) – (Rev. Busan, 2014) – (Rev. Dubai, 2018) – (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*

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