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INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

PHYSICAL OPEN CONSULTATIONS OF THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET‑RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

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(Gavel)

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, welcome. Let me welcome you to this Second Physical Open Consultations Meeting of the Working Group on International Internet‑Related Public Policy Issues on the topic of access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs.

I'm opening the meeting because unfortunately the chairman of the Working Group, Majed Al Mazyed, will be arriving in Geneva later this morning. Should be with us around 11:00, I believe.

I would particularly like to welcome representatives of disability organizations that contribute so much to ITU's work on accessibility. Since I first joined the ITU as an elected official in 2007, it's been my objective to mainstream accessibility in ITU, and so it's a great pleasure for me to be here to open the ‑‑ this consultation meeting.

ITU is the first international standards body to adopt an accessibility standard. The first standard on accessibility was adopted in 1994. It was the International Text Telephone Standard, Recommendation ITU‑T V.18, but work on accessibility in ITU didn't really take off until 2008, when we launched a number of major initiatives. We chose Connecting Persons with Disabilities: ICT Opportunities For All as the theme for that year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. We established the Joint Coordination Activity On Accessibility and Human Factors standardization, JCA‑AHF, open to all experts working in the field and chaired by Andrea Saks, who is one of the three laureates recognized at the World Telecom Information Society Day. And we initiated the Dynamic Coalition On Accessibility and Disability at the Internet Governance Forum.

And an historic resolution was adopted at that year's World Telecom Standardization Assembly, first ITU resolution recognizing the importance of work on accessibility. Since then, ITU has incorporated accessibility requirements into a range of standards, in particular, ITU's IPTV suite of standards which has many accessibility features and in which Mr. Masahito Kawamori has been very active.

Accessibility has now become mainstreamed across the organization in policy, regulatory and technical areas, and we collaborate on the topic with many different organizations.

The last Plenipotentiary Conference set a target that to enable environments that ensure accessibility telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities in all countries. You will hear more about ITU's work on accessibility later this morning, but in particular, I would like to mention our collaboration with G3ict and its executive director Axel Leblois, through which we have developed an online toolkit for policymakers, regulators and other stakeholders on policies and strategies addressing ICT accessibility in line with the U.N. Convention.

ITU is now recognized as one of the foremost UN agencies addressing accessibility and facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities in this work, and it's seen as a model for the rest of the UN.

Although we have another ITU Council Working Group considering the special needs of protecting children with disabilities online, this is the first time that the issue of accessibility and the Internet has been considered within this particular Council Working Group, and I was very pleased that it decided to launch this open consultation last year.

The consultation presents a unique opportunity for the Working Group to benefit from the interaction with different stakeholders and those that are directly involved in the area of accessibility and ICTs to learn of their experiences, their needs and the future activities.

So I will close by thanking you all again for being with us today and in particular thank our distinguished panelists on the podium and the 50 entities that submitted their views to the consultation. Your active engagement proves the importance and the value of these consultations.

I will now hand over to my colleague Jose Maria Diaz Batanero, the lead focal point on accessibility in the secretariat and wish you a very productive and enjoyable day here with us today.

Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates. It's my pleasure to moderate this morning, this panel on Open Accessibility and Internet on this Working Group on Internet. This is the second consultation organized, but it's first consultation that deals with the issue of Internet accessibility and to open this ‑‑ this consultation, this one‑day meeting in which we will be reviewing the 50 input received throughout the process. We have organized a small panel of experts with six lead experts that have dedicated their life to the issue of persons with disabilities, accessibility, technological solutions, and I'm sure you will find the interventions very informative and they will lead our discussions throughout the day. One of the panelists, by the way, is connected online.

I will start by giving each of the panelists six to seven minutes to present to you their experiences and perspective. After that, we will have a lengthy discussion, and then I will open the floor to hear for your questions to the experts. Please when we open the floor, make sure this is addressing questions to the speakers because we will have many opportunities during the day to present your views and your experiences. So everyone will have a chance later on to present their inputs.

When you speak, this is a reminder to everybody, including myself, try to speak slow, because we ‑‑ as you will see, this meeting is being captioned. So we have captioning, which you can access also via the Internet if you cannot see the screen.

You can connect to the website of the group, and you can access the captioning, and we also have sign language interpretation. So, again, also to myself, speak slow so we can facilitate the work of our colleagues.

With that introduction, I will hand over the floor to the first speaker, Ms. Catalina Devandas, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She's from Costa Rica. She's experienced on protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in experiences such as the World Bank, the Human Rights Commission, and now in her role as a Special Rapporteur, she will present to us the CRPD, and some of the framework in which most of the human rights or persons with disabilities have been discussed today. With, that I will leave Catalina to herself to explain.

>> CATALINA DEVANDAS: Thank you very much, Jose Maria. Thank you to the ITU for inviting me and to this forum to be able and to be open to and listen to what I'm saying.

I would like to congratulate the ITU that we have fully accessibility events, as closed caption, sign language, and all the other accessibility features that we need, and that is to be noted.

Also and I think it has been already ‑‑ it has already been said is the importance of having this open consultation and engagement with other stakeholders, including organizations with persons with disabilities that have a lot to say in how to make ICTs inclusive and accessibility to persons with disabilities.

In my role as a Special Rapporteur and first of all, I'm not an expert on information and communication technologies. I mean, have you here the main experts. I'm mostly an expert on the law, and on the international law, on the Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is the highest standard that recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities. It's an international agreement which so far has been ratified by more than 160 countries, so we are very close to universal ratification. We celebrate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the convention. That's a good moment to kind of review what have we achieved in this last ten years in promoting the inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities.

I believe that ‑‑ and it is important to remind ourselves that the CRPD represents a priority shift and the way we perceive disability and the way we understand what disability is a phenomenon. And we focus more in the interaction between the person's impairment and the environment, and what we would like to more and more is the attention turning to the barriers that we have in the environment to fully participate and to be independent and to have normal regulatory productive lives in our societies, in our communications.

So we want to focus and ensure participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and for that we have to transform the environments that we have and which we live on.

The CRPD process me specific obligations to States and I believe that's important in terms of accessibility and in terms of access to information and communication, of course, but it also has broader obligations in terms of, for instance, changing or adopting new legislation that will promote the change that we need. So there is an obligation to review the policy framework and the legislative framework of the states.

Also to change and to review any other administrative frameworks that would impact and the promotion or the protection of rights of persons with disabilities.

We have to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account in every area. The CRPD has a main core concept that is the concept of nothing about us without us. Persons with disabilities has to be a part of everything. And there's obligation to consult them and every policy that might affect them. And to tell you the truth, I can hardly think of any policy that doesn't affect persons with disabilities. So basically we need to make sure that persons with disabilities are fully engaged in this review that the governments and states are making to promote their inclusion and their participation, and, of course, states have a major obligation to refrain that will discriminate or harm persons with disabilities.

It's important that will ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to all information and communication there is available for the rest of the public.

We have two main articles in the Convention that I believe are important to mention here, which is Article 9 and Article 21. Article 9 is Article on accessibility and then Article 21 is an article on access to information and communication. Article 9 on accessibility, I will say, is what we call an enabler article. If you don't have accessibility, if the technology is not accessible, then you cannot use that. You cannot have access to information and communication unless it is accessible. We really need to think that ‑‑ and accessibility is also a guiding principle. It's a basic requirement to be able to enjoy the rest of the rights that are set in the Convention. We can not fully participate, we cannot live independently in the community, we cannot really be ‑‑ to have access to justice or to any other right without having accessibility.

Accessible communication as we have here, the right to deaf person to have an interpreter or have closed caption, the right to a person that is blind to have a screen reader and most importantly, to have web contents that are ‑‑ that could be readed by that screen reader.

So we really need to have this view on also accessibility becoming more of an issue of inclusive design and universal design. This means that whatever we do to include persons with disabilities will not only be good for persons with disabilities, but for everybody.

I think that one of the contributions that we want to see and make from the disability community is to enhance or to promote an environment that is accessible and inclusive for all. So we are thinking about let's move towards inclusive design, a design that will be good for everybody, universal design will work for everybody, it will be user friendly.

We have here many examples of how you can make an environment accessible. We have the ramp, which had allowed me to come to the podium and you will see that not many UN agencies have that, not even in the Secretariat. We have always access to the podium for persons with disabilities. We have, as I mentioned already, the sign language interpretation, the closed caption and we need, of course, to think about how can we go to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities to one of the most important tools that there are now, which is Internet. How can we live without access to Internet? However, we still have a lot of people around the world, especially persons with disabilities that doesn't have access to Internet.

The CRPD has specifically tried to address that gap and specifically said that the states have to provide access to information and communication technologies. The State Parties must take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to information and communication technologies and to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility.

ICT, it's an opportunity, of course, and I don't have to convince you of that. It represents an opportunity to promote the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities. It enhances autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities. It transformed the services to make them more inclusive so as not only that you can design products for persons with disabilities but that you can enhance a way in which you are designing services to make them more inclusive to all.

It is also key ‑‑ it's a key tool, for instance, in areas for which I'm working, like promotion and advancement of the new Development Agenda, the SDGs, and being of course, to reduce poverty by having access to information, by having access to benefits sometimes information and technology allows persons with disabilities to access benefits that otherwise will not be accessible. For instance, when you have wires made by telephone, and I'm looking at time. So we have to stop now.

Sorry. So I will leave it there. We probably just to finish, and after that, I will touch into the challenges or the new opportunities, but I see this as an important way also to promote participation of persons with disabilities, which for us is key. I mean, this will allow us to participation in consultations, to participate with independence and autonomy but also it will allow to see how persons with disabilities can really contribute. The ICTs can really show how persons with disabilities can make important contributions to their lives ‑‑ to the lives of the communities as well.

And then I will leave the challenges probably for the discussion afterwards, but it is ‑‑ it's also important just to finish the contribution that we can do or how it's important to include persons with disabilities in government, right? Because we have a great opportunity to promote transparency, to improve public service deliver and to avoid corruption by making this accessible to all. So thank you very much. I leave it there.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you, Catalina.

So ICT is an enabler of other rights. That's a very good idea that Catalina has shared with us.

I will move to the next speaker who is Andrea Saks. I don't think I need to introduce her. You know her. She's an activist. We are in a situation today that accessibility is very important. I don't know if you also know that Andrea is the chair of the Joint Coordination Activity On Accessibility and Human Factors. And also the IGF Dynamic Coalition On Accessibility and Disability. She was the laureate of 2008 for accessibility.

Today Andrea will highlight to us the importance of awareness in accessibility. So I will let her make her presentation.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Jose Maria. A lot of you also know me as a PITA, a pain in the ass. I nag, nag, nag. Poor Mr. Johnson has experienced this firsthand for the last eight years.

And he's also been very good and I usually go with my hand open for money.

I wanted to talk about a lot of things, but in consultation with my colleague, Masahito, I decided to go on accessibility awareness.

Can we have the next slide, please?

The thing is we can have as many technical guidelines as we want. We can write really great ones. We can have consultations, but ‑‑ because we have the first actual one was the accessibility check list which was for standard writers that enabled them to get a better perspective and put their feet in someone else's shoes when they were designing a standard. And, of course, I think everyone in this room has got to be familiar with W3C and WAG, the guidelines for the web. But that may not be enough.

Can I have the next slide, please.

And also government ‑‑ I will go through these, because then I will talk my head off. Governments have adopted W3C and WCAG. They know accessibility has to happen. How does that really happen? What do we do with the back ones, where we have to get information from the ones in the past that we can't access?

So everybody is saying the right thing. Everybody is adopting all of these guidelines, and there's somewhere I will show you at the end, but that isn't the real problem. Can you go to the ‑‑ that slide.

Why do we have so many websites that are not accessible? And I think I learned something myself, because even though I come from a family of deaf parents, I didn't know very much about blind people when I first came. I didn't understand how in the heck they could actually navigate the web and also when I went to the first Microsoft accessibility meeting, which was way back in 1995, I was absolutely amazed at how many blind people attended and the war that they created with Microsoft to be able to have screen readers actually be able to use the operating system.

So it was an interesting time to realize how different people have different problems. The other problems are people with learning difficulties which basically I was very lucky I had deaf parents because I used my ears overtime and I talked and I learned everything that I needed to know in school through my ears because dyslexia was not defined when I was going to school. And because of computer technology, I'm very lucky, again, because most people don't think I have dyslexia. I get ‑‑ oh, you go too fast. Your brain is doing this and you are not paying attention which is what I used to get from my dad. Or word blindness or transposition of words or finding something on the Internet or page has been a real problem and also not being very fast.

So I identify greatly, individually with people who have a difficulty ‑‑ and this affects a lot of us who don't ‑‑ aren't technically dyslexic but you can't find something and you are looking and you are looking and it's right there in front of you. I'm sure everybody has had that experience.

So how do we accomplish these gaps where we have got the guidelines and we have got problems in accessing the web, even for people who are supposedly competent in everyday life, being able to read and write?

I will go to the next slide.

Well, education in universities and colleges and in schools, I think, has really only begun to take off within the last three or four years and wouldn't you say about teaching people about accessibility as a subject.

We need to learn how people with disabilities use the web, what tools they use, what kind of websites are difficult. I don't know if any of you ‑‑ and this is not a ‑‑ I'm not trying to make a disparaging comment against Flash but I didn't know that Flash was really problematic for screen savers until a blind person pointed it out. So basically what we have to do start doing is finding out really how different people use the web and use the Internet. And I would like to advocate training in schools and classes, especially for people who are engineers, who design webs, who are artists, who are politicians. Anybody in colleges, in schools in general so that they understand how these different techniques work for people. And this will also encourage main streaming.

I'm going to actually ask you to go to page 3 of the other one, because I realized I have a bit more time. Of the other one. And I'm not sure ‑‑ hang on. Let me go to the other one.

I have captioning right here because it's great and I haven't ‑‑ all right. Let me go to page 3.

There are basic barriers for persons with disabilities in getting into the web and I believe my colleague Beat will go into some of this in greater detail. How many times have you gone on the web and you see a video and you don't have any captioning and you don't know what's going on or television programs? It's getting better and better and better, but there are still a great many videos that are not captioned and there are certainly not many signed videos.

People who don't have written language, especially people who live in very far flung places who do not write down the way they speak, the daisy consortium have tracked these to great detail and, you never think about that, how would they use the web? Well, there are methods of using icons and pictograms and I saw one for people taking their sheep to market. It was done greatly. I never thought of that!

We have gone into screen readers a bit. In the photo is not identified, it just comes up as a blank square and pretty wonderful, gorgeous websites that maybe the worst possible thing to navigate because you cannot get through the forest through the trees.

A website shouldn't be chocker blocked with everything that's in it. Can I have the next slide, please. And I didn't say table of contents but that's something I have never seen is a table of contents of a website which would be really terrific. We have the next one which is these are just the lists of things that I think would be helpful, and I made a small list. I was going to give you this but I decided if I had extra time I would go through these. It gives you a list of everything that I thought would be really nice.

And I didn't mention San serif fronts which are useful and being able for the person on the web to adjust them for their own vision because I haven't gone into people with tunnel vision or people who have very low sight, but do use the web without a screen reader.

The next slide, please. So this is kind of crux of it. Design versus accessibility. Now, I truly believe that people are clever and that designers can create websites for the masses and at the same time take accessibility into account. They need to remember that in certain circumstances people may not have written languages, and remember timing issues. This is something I got to change on our website, Mr. Johnson, because I was trying to go to the front page to go to the way it had changed slightly from where it was before, you would click on the picture and you would take it to the website that you wanted.

All of a sudden, I saw these links pop up. I couldn't get to the links in time. So I wrote and they changed it.

They slowed it down. Now if nobody had complained ‑‑ and I complain all the time. So that got done. It made such a difference to me. I can only imagine that somebody with a greater problem than myself would find this really, really helpful.

And so when people design timing issues, they are really, really important. I have one minute and I will wrap up.

It goes without saying ‑‑ and I will repeat this because I come from deaf culture. Videos without captioning, it's so easy to do it now. I mean, okay, maybe certain automatic captioning is not that wonderful but it's better than nothing. Audio description makes it even better because people I found out who are hearing can be in the kitchen and listen to what's going on on TV. Now captioning was fought against by the industry tooth and nail! And now it is just an accepted thing on television.

So why not an accepted thing on the Internet?

So I would like to conclude with the fact that we need to educate people in this room, wherever you go, to think about how would you use it if you didn't have all the faculties that you do. And to think about that. Make sure that there are educational programs in colleges and universities that actually teach web accessibility and accessibility in general.

I will show you the page ‑‑ the last page, please. We have just done some new recommendations. They are free to download. How to do an accessible meeting and accessible remote participation and accessibility terms and definitions. I'm used when people use universal design, instead of design for all. Because we can't do that.

And Mr. Kawamori will talk about IPTV in his presentation. So we just did this and we are going to do more guidelines in the future. So thank you for letting me speak about how I find the web and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Thank you.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you, Andrea. How will you use it? You need the mind shift to educate and promote awareness to design accessible solutions, you need to question yourself, how somebody else will use it. So that's a great question. Thank you, Andrea.

And she even did my job. She already introduced Masahito. She already explained what he will be talking about. So Masahito Kawamori. He's a professor of Keio University, but he's also Rapporteur of question 28 multimedia framework for e‑health applications and ITU‑T Study Group 16. He will talk to us about standard technology. Masahito.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you. I thank ITU for holding such a good event and gathering all the people that are related to the Internet and accessibility.

So I would like to talk on accessibility of the Internet and standard technology. So next slide, please.

So there are some challenges in using Internet and some people might hesitate to use, especially people with disabilities as well as holder people may find it difficult to use the Internet due to various reasons, one of them is lack of skill, and they think they don't have the skill to use the Internet or they may be concerned about the use ‑‑ I mean, the Internet may incur some security issues. They may have some fraud sites, you know, or some hoax sites and things that they may be ripped off. So that's another security issue.

And also a question about the quality of the information that you get on the Internet because it's an open platform. You can get many different pieces of information concerning your health, for example, but they may be wrong. Wikipedia is one example of a very accessible information, source of information, but 40% of the medical information you can find on the Wikipedia is totally wrong.

And also, they may find the Internet very complex to navigate, as well as to get information, or to get on the net in the first place might be very difficult.

And also it is true that information seeking on the net demands some or many cognitive skills such as reasoning, working memory, perceptual speed, just as Andrea just said. In the web page moves very fast that you can't follow, if you are searching for something and you forget what you were looking for, then you don't get anything. And so ‑‑ but these things might happen. And these are the things that sort of put people off, especially those people with disabilities as well as specific needs.

And so these are some of the problems that we have, especially with respect to accessibility to the Internet for people with disabilities and specific needs.

Next slide, please.

So turning the question around, we have 9 following issues, I mean challenges for the Internet to be more accessibility to the persons with disabilities and specific needs. The first one is the most obvious, the user interface, ease of use, and simplicity, including presentation mode. For example, people with cognitive disabilities would have a different requirement ‑‑ set of requirements than people without such a disability. And as I mentioned security is a big issue and then trust and credibility is also another issue.

Trust is very important in using technology. If you don't have the trust, you can't use that technology. So for example, the information has to be selected and that ‑‑ the quality of that information should be assured by someone or at least give the credibility.

And then usability. No stress associated with daily use and little training for use and for maintenance of that technology. So the Internet has to be stress‑free, otherwise people find it very difficult to use.

And then the last point is accessibility may mean vulnerability. The more accessible the people can get more vulnerable because it's like an open door. And you don't know who is there, behind that door. So sometimes the accessibility may work against persons with disabilities. So these are some of the challenges that I can think of in considering making the Internet more accessible.

Next slide, please. And I would like to take an example of a standard technology for accessibility to the Internet, and which is the ITU‑T IPTV, that Mr. Malcolm Johnson just mentioned.

So IPTV stands for Internet protocol TV, television. So information and service interface for multimedia content and information on the web or the Internet.

It's characterized by use of ‑‑ of its use ‑‑ I mean ease of its use because you can use a remote controller. That means you don't have to have special training to use because everybody almost knows how to use remote controller, except for some babies who may not have seen any TV sets before.

And it's interactive. So just like the web, a little web but light enough for the TV sets. So it's not so complicated and it's secure because it's IPTV uses content protection and authentication. It authenticates what sort of person is getting access to the content. And also, especially in ITU IPTV, quality is guaranteed because it's based on managed service, and selected and credible information is provided, and it's trustworthy because of the standard as well as quality. And it's standardized and implemented and already deployed and available. And it can be done ‑‑ delivered to multi device, not just for TV sets but for tablets and SmartPhones so you can choose your devices to your accessible liking.

Next slide, please.

So taking that example, I would like to address the gaps in addressing these challenges that I just mentioned. One big challenge is the lack of standard on services. We have a standard on IP, Internet protocol, but on top of that, we have many different services and we don't agree on standards on these, and it sometimes makes it very difficult to have accessible information sharing and it will lead to higher cost and more danger of traps and lack of basic minimum robust and mature technologies or profiles that can be applied to a large segment of the target, especially for persons with disabilities and specific needs.

What it means is people ‑‑ especially vendors and developers are more interested in advanced features and they want to ‑‑ you know, employ, deploy, more interesting features and advanced features just as Andrea mentioned about ‑‑ mentioned Flash, for example. Good graphics and things, but, for example, for the blind people, character‑based user interface is sufficient, actually. It doesn't have to have very flashy graphics but vendors or developers might find it necessary to develop their web page using a lot of graphics. And that sometimes makes their web pages very inaccessible.

And lack of sense of urgency. Accessibility is not for the future, but for now we have to do something now with what with have now. And this is something we have to know. Probably this is what Andrea can do with her awareness education.

And lastly, but not least, fragmented market. So the user is confused. Shall I use IOS? Shall I use Android? Should I use this or that? This is very confusing.

So these are some of the things that stand in line in tackling these challenges that I just mentioned before.

Next slide, please.

And this is the last slide. The role of governments. What would be interesting for governments to consider in tackling these challenges and gaps?

One is, of course, from my standpoint, from my point of view, promotion of global standard technologies. We need standards, rather than proprietary vendor‑laden locked in technology, just as I said, it will confuse people, not only confuse people, but also it raises the cost of purchasing, for example.

Through procurement policies, also some support on deployment and education and training as Andrea said.

And also we need interoperable profiles with regional flavor. Some will have different languages and cultures and regions but we don't want fragmented profiles. We want to have standardized interoperable profiles with some degrees of options. And by doing so, I think the governments can help the promotion of global standard technologies as well as better accessibility to the Internet.

Next slide, please. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you, Masahito. There is a lack of sense of urgency. I like this quote. We have to have accessibility now, otherwise we are missing an opportunity. We will get back to this opportunity of accessibility.

I will pass you to the next speaker, Donal Rice. He's connecting from Ireland. He's accessing remotely. We are proud to have our meetings accessible, also enabling remote participation for anywhere in the world, if you have good connectivity you can join our meetings and today, later on my colleague will highlight how many people are connecting from their homes. We have a number of people following this from their homes all around the world and one of them is Donal from Dublin. Donal is the accessibility coordinator for Ireland National Disability Authority, but he also worked in the context of the UN international organizations including ITU, and produced a number of reports on the role of policy and the last one was produced with our colleagues from the development sector, who are sitting in the back. You will hear from that reporter later on. With this introduction, I will let Donal present his role, and his experience on promoting accessibility in Ireland. I hope you are connected.

>> DONAL RICE: I am, indeed. I feel very empowered sitting here in my home office being able to listen and see what's going on and to contribute.

So thank you very much for this opportunity. So Mr. Chairman, fellow panelists, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give an overview of some policy issues and some policy approaches that we are using in Ireland, but also my work as an academic has made me aware of.

So without further ado, an introduction for myself. I work with our Irish government to the center for excellence on universal design. As I know, Ireland is the only place that has a center for excellence in universal design. And I'm a lecturer with the University of Galway, and I have had opportunities over the years to work with the ITU on the ‑‑ on projects such as the eAccessibility toolkit which the chairman mentioned at the top of the meeting, in connection with G3ict and Susan Schorr and her team on developing a number of policy support documents I would call them on implementing accessibility, ICT policies.

And I mention those again very briefly.

I want to talk to you to give you a couple of ideas of approaches that we are taking in Ireland. They may not be suitable for every country and every region but they are approaches that we have seen some success with in improving the accessibility of ICT of a particular websites for persons with disabilities. Let's look at some best practices. It's always useful to see what's happening in countries. There's web accessibility in different countries, I do teach students from developing regions and their research informs me a little bit about what's happening there and then we look at some lessons that everyone can learn.

Just a little bit about the organization that I work with in Ireland, the National Disability Authority and its center for universal design, we were set up as part of a national disability and accessibility strategy in 2007. We incorporate universal design as we view it looking at three different domains, the built environment, products and services and ICT. And we feel that it's always important to combine whatever guidance and research we do in this area, looking at all three because one cannot be made accessible without the other. And so they all face hand and glove as it were.

We have done a number of pieces of research on web accessibility and we have looked at people's experience in Ireland in using public sector websites. We have also looked at how other countries are performing in terms compliance with web accessibility because we have a number web accessibility directive in Europe, which I will talk about again very shortly and we need to look at how prepared European countries are to meet the requirements under this web accessibility directive.

And as Andrea Saks was saying, accessibility remains very low worldwide. Let's look at some of the policy guidelines that can work there.

Just one piece of work that we have done in Ireland we have developed a national tourism sector guidance. The tourism, are not too welcoming of standards when we approached them and we said we would like to develop a special occasion for you on universal design for customer communication they were quite reluctant, but then we suggested to them that we could develop not just a national standard, but a suite of toolkits that could be used in hotels and restaurants and various tourism attractions around the country for training staff very quickly on customer communications, covering written electronic and face‑to‑face communications.

And these toolkits are very, very easy check lists good and bad practice on what to do when it comes to, for example, designing a menu, for example, when speaking to someone who is hard of hearing or someone who is deaf, and also looking at how to design some basic features on the websites so that they are more usable and accessible to everyone.

We have found this approach coming very much from business benefits has resulted in the big uptake by a sector who were quite skeptical of a standard in the first instance. It was actually the toolkits that they have used and one example of a business outcome for a business that ‑‑ which is a venue and a pub here in Dublin, that used the toolkits was their online ticket sales for their concerts every Friday and Saturday night doubled over 12 months. And, again, that is because they made some simple changes to their website to reduce the clutter and to make them more accessible.

And it's a real example of how accessibility can be used as a sharp tool to improve the usability of a website for everyone, but also business outcomes, once the business is open to going through a process. So this wasn't a big audit process or it didn't mean a huge amount of development of the website. It was just really a matter of following the simple guidance in the toolkit and then making sure that things like the online application form were easier to use and it drew a lot of ‑‑ more customers to use the website than had previously used it.

Okay. So a little bit back to our research. That's one little project that I thought I would mention. We received a prize last week, the Zero Project and Ambassador Luis Gallegos, looked at the toolkits and the standards that Ireland have taken. But looking at our research, as I said we have done research into people's experiences in Ireland of using public sector websites. And that research has thrown up some very interesting figures in terms of what needs to happen next in policy. So 50% of respondents in a survey we conducted said that they don't use public sector websites, even though Ireland would maybe pride itself as being one of the more Internet e‑Government ready countries.

This was for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons was people just find government websites confusing, difficult to use, full of jargon, difficult instructions, and particularly for maybe older people or people who are unemployed, they tend to use other customer channels which are far more resource and costly to maintain, than they do online channels and that's a huge cost to the government. So I'm being quite hard‑nosed and business focused here this morning because there is a huge government to getting websites wrong.

Some of the main issues that we found was there was no consistent use of branding language or design across the public sector in Ireland. Everybody's website is different. Everyone designs a website so that it looks a little bit different to the next public body.

That confuses people. And it's very much a haphazard approach to accessible. Most public body is in Ireland or aware of accessible with legislation in place in 2005 with approach to making a website accessible can be different and varies across different bodies. Another piece of research that we did which was in support of the European web accessibility directive was to look at how public sector websites across Europe are improving.

And, again, the results were quite interesting. A lot of websites are not fully conformance with the standards that Andrea was talking about, such as the web content accessibility guidelines but, in fact, in many case it's would take very little to make them fully compliant with the standard.

Some of the key areas that need attention, it was interesting to see that video and audio media is now being used ‑‑ is now being used more ‑‑ so I'm just enabling my web cam here for those of you who wish to look in.

Audio visual media content is now being used more and more on public bodies websites to communicate with customers in and citizens in a more maybe friendly way, but however, none of these videos have captions. So while public bodies are innovating by producing more videos they are not captioning them. So we are seeing that there's a big issue here occurring.

The other issues we found were things like websites might be accessible but the office documents that use the websites are Office documents that are published to the websites like PDFs very often are not accessible. So, again, for the specific things that could be addressed.

So I will just talk about a different ‑‑ arrange different policy approaches that could be considered by the group here this morning. What tends to happen with web accessibility is that there can be a range of antidiscrimination measures put in place. That was the occasion in Ireland with the disability act of 2005. That's what's happening in many developing countries at the moment. We are seeing with the signing and the ratification of the UN CRPD, many countries adopting disability discrimination and web accessibility being included into that. And the G3ict, UN CRPD progress report said that respondents to that survey thought that in up to 45% of cases government websites are accessible or at least attempts are being made in their countries to make their websites accessible.

And that in about ‑‑ in about 30 to 40% of the cases that there are some minimum requirements in legislation, in policy in order for websites to be accessible.

So more accessibility policy coming on stream.

In Europe, there's a range of approaches that have been taken and I'm citing Europe because there's a lot of research that has been happening in recent years to support the web accessibility directive. We see a range of different types of policies coming into place in Europe. Italy has one of the more famous laws called a Stanca law, which eAccessibility and in Australia, there's an e‑Government law. Again, accessibility is included not so much as an antidiscrimination measure but as a quality measure within e‑Government legislation and policy.

And countries like Spain, UK, Ireland, France have quality antidiscrimination legislation.

And countries then like Netherlands and Portugal have adopted a more kind of political standpoint. It's been a cabinet decision that websites should be accessibility.

In Germany, one interesting thing is. BITV, provides persons with disabilities with the right to negotiate or the channel to negotiate with the public body through a process called structured negotiation and very similar to what Laney Finegold has been negotiating in America, for those that know that disability rights lawyer.

The opportunity for ‑‑ so the BITV gives people with disabilities the opportunity to negotiate with public body and to seek some type of resource if their website is not accessibility.

And we have seen cases been taken in countries like Austria, Malta, Australia, and the USA where websites have been found to be inaccessible.

So that's the first policy approach. As I said, it be very often an antidiscrimination approach but it can mean that web accessibility.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: You need to wrap up. One more minute.

>> DONAL RICE: One more minute is all I need. The second policy is the public procurement. And ‑‑ (No audio).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: That wasn't a minute. Donal, are you still there?

>> I think he lost his phone connection.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Can we ‑‑ are you reconnecting?

>> He's reconnecting. Just give him a few seconds.

>> DONAL RICE: How, can you hear me now?

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Sorry.

That wasn't me. You can go ahead.

>> DONAL RICE: That's fine. My phone just went dead. Thankfully I have different modalities here and I'm able to use my computer speaker rather than my phone. So one more slide and then I will leave it at that, Mr. Chairman., and the second policy solution is around public procurement. As I was saying, the idea here is that if accessibility requirements can be included in public procurement processes from the very beginning, then that does two things. It ensures that public websites stand a better chance of being accessible because it forms a mandatory requirement during the procurement process, but it also notices of market better at producing better websites. And that can have a knock down effect to other websites that the web industry in that country provide.

So it could be to ‑‑ it could be in the provision of accessible websites to the private sector. If web design industry in a country is able to produce accessible websites then there's a better chance that that accessibility would be provided to other sectors such as the banking sector or the shopping sector.

And I have to plug a fantastic report that the ITU have done, that provides guidance and model web accessibility policies for countries that have not already adopted web accessibility and that's the "Model ICT Accessibility Report" which is available to download from the ITU website.

So I will stop there, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of different policy approaches we see happening both in my country, but also around the world enabling web accessibility for persons with disabilities. Thank you very much.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you, Donal. We will hear in a few minutes more about this report. My colleague Susan is at the back and she will present with a little bit more detail. Thank you, Donal, for this intervention and how simple solution can lead to big changes and increased engagement. I think that's one of the main messages that Donal. Simple solutions can make a huge difference.

With, that I will pass over to our next expert, Mr. Beat Kleeb, with the World Federation of the Deaf. He's been involved in this work for over 30 years. He's pioneering the work on text telephone and telephone replay services and captioning at the Swiss teletext system. Mr. Kleeb, he will be presenting to us the issue of access to the internet for the deaf community. So with that, I will pass the floor to Beat.

>> BEAT KLEEB: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me this opportunity to represent the World Federation of the Deaf.

Deafness is not a visible disability, and therefore, people are most often not aware of the consequences.

There's an estimated population of more than 70 million deaf people globally. Of which 83 ‑‑ of which 80% live in developing countries, and 83% do not receive any form of formal education. That's less than 1% receiving ‑‑ there's less than 1% receiving bilingual education in both sign language and the written language of their country as recommended by the World Federation of the Deaf.

Next slide, please. Basic factors for human rights of deaf people, gravitate around sign language and sign language rights. Sign language are the national ‑‑ the natural languages of deaf people and sign languages are necessary for deaf people to access and receive full human rights. Deaf people are better educated in their natural sign languages, in what is called bilingual education, sign language and the written language of their country.

Accessibility often rests upon the availability of sign language interpreters which they need for access to many participates of society.

I would not be here without sign language interpreters.

The UN CRPD states that we all must be able to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. If you look at Article 9 and 21, they are especially important for deaf individuals. Full access to information and communication. Sign language, captioning, accessible websites, video chats as you can see up here are just a few examples of accessible means for deaf people.

The World Federation of Deaf ‑‑ of the deaf has a vision that in 2020 information will be fully accessible, largely through services offered over the Internet.

For information, entertainment, emergencies and communication.

The world federation of the deaf have three. The official identification of national sign languages and adequate support for those languages accessibility features and services to be included in all government laws, regulations, licenses, and they have to be enforced as per the UN CRPD.

And last, we need to not just work for persons with disabilities. We need to work with them and take advantage of their resources. The UN CRPD is very clear in the motto: Nothing about us without us.

Please take home these words. Thank you very much for your attention.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you, Beat. We need to work with persons with disabilities. That's why we put all the resources that we can afford to have captioning and have our meetings the more accessible. We will hear a little bit later about our accessibility policy when we present ITU's work.

With this I will pass to the next speaker and the last and final speaker, professor Dena Al‑Thani from the Queen Mary University of London. She's a researcher. She's going to bring us the perspective of academia on web accessible, this time for the visually impaired. With that introduction, I will let professor Al‑Thani present us her work.

>> DENA AL-THANI: Hello, everyone. My name is Dena Al‑Thani. I'm very happy to attend here, to attend a valuable meeting for me personally as I have been working in this field for more than six years and it's been my specialty for develop accessibility for visually impaired.

Today, I will take you and give you an overview of the research, of the work done in web accessible for the visually impaired from the research perspective and basically more into the technical perspective. Next slide, please.

So my presentation will go over these four points, although, I doubt I will reach the fourth point. Firstly, I will go through the challenges faced. Secondly, I will go through what is actually being done in academia and what has been done in the research work and what are the challenges facing this research work and what is stopping them from developing ‑‑ to reaching the public and reaching the industry.

Next slide, please.

So what are the challenges facing the visually impaired? Mainly, as the W3C web accessibility outlined, there are four challenges. The accessibility first, the accessibility of a web page. If a web page is not accessible, it be used by the tools that the blind use. Mainly Andrea, they use screen readers but they also use a display. In a recent survey over 80% of visually impaired use screen readers. So if a web page is not accessible, then a screen reader cannot reach and render the data for the visually impaired.

Secondly the compatibility of the browser, such as Internet browser, Google, Chrome and Firefox, if they are not compatible with the screen readers, then they cannot render the web content.

And thirdly, the assistive technology. How good is the screen reader? There are a lot of available screen readers in.

Our days some of them are totally free. Some of them are commercial. And to my point of view, the fourth point is one of the most important points is the rapid growth of web technology. We have new web technologies nearly now the on a daily basis in the commercial sector so how screen readers can catch up with this rapid growth of web technologies.

And here I outlined two issues faced by screen readers, mainly reading a PDF document or dealing with dynamic data from a website.

Next slide.

So from ab academic perspective, I outlined the work being done. I have mentioned a lot of examples here and I have categorized them to four main points. Firstly, the first type of studies being done are behavior study which is basically watching visually impaired, noting down the issue and these type of studies are usually always the initial point for the rest of the four points in these slides.

Secondly comes the browser specific developing a nonvisual browser for the visually impaired that renders data only in speech or sound such as music tones or abstract tones. Thirdly comes the interface specific solutions which is mainly focusing on certain solutions in the web, and here I have the third point, a very interesting example which is enhancing the Google Search engine, using sound and music tone to facilitate Google Search engine features such as queries suggestions and ‑‑ and viewing the website ‑‑ the web results links.

The fourth type of the studies which are transcoding and annotation, it's basically enhancing the code of a web page and here W3C has a great initiative which is called WAI‑ARIA which advises enhancing the code to enable screen readers to reach the data and the final type of studies are the abstract concept as I'm sure most of you know about the universal design, a concept which is two decades produced by Shneiderman, and then comes other concepts which are designed, which are produced later, in a later decade, which emphasize on designing something on a website or interface that is specifically done for a certain group of users. So including the user in the design process.

Next slide, please.

So in this final slide, I will discuss the four challenges from the point of view of academia. Why these studies or why this research is not being produced to the public and why ‑‑ why this research is facing the challenges. So the first challenge is the website compliance with the web accessibility guidelines, as many speakers have mentioned today, there are a lot of websites that are not accessible and there are a lot of studies and surveys that show that these websites are not accessible.

Secondly, as Andrea have mentioned the awareness, and this is a very important point. The awareness and also the education and the knowledge of web developer. If the website developer has not got ‑‑ has not acquired the knowledge to develop an accessible website, then this would be an issue that academia and commercial work need to look into educating web developer about the web accessibility guidelines and how to actually and technically implement them.

The third point, which academia also stress on and here is a result of a very recent study which surveyed 300 accessibility experts, that indicated the importance of including the potential user in the design process in the requirement gathering, in the analysis, in the design and then in the testing. So including the visually impaired and including the target ‑‑ the target user that would be using the interface in the design process and testing it would be done before raising it or before publishing it for public.

And the last point that is always mentioned in academic conferences is the link between academia and industry or the public, is how to communicate the ideas in academia to the public and this is one of the reasons I'm here today.

Thank you very much for listening.

(Applause).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you. So with this, we have concluded the first round of interventions and as usually happens when you have so much experience, you go a little bit over time. We want to open the floor for questions from the audience. Please, emphasize making question to the speakers. We have plenty of opportunities during the rest of the day to hear your statements and your interventions. So if you have any questions to address to the panelists, I would like to open the floor and, please introduce yourself and say from which organization you are coming. And if you can indicate to which panelist, including Donal who is connected.

Russian Federation, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would like to thank all speakers for very interesting presentations. Before asking the question, I would like to request you to publish those presentations on the web, reproduce them, because it's very useful material.

I have a question to Mr.  ‑‑ sorry. So Mr. Masahito Kawamori. It was very interesting for me to hear information concerning information published in medical Wikipedia that 30% is wrong. It's dangerous for people with disabilities. It's also dangerous for the rest of the society. Thank you.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Let's take two other questions so we can ‑‑ Canada?

>> CANADA: Thank you, Chairman. First of all, congratulations and thank you to all the speakers. I think this has been an excellent set of presentations, very illustrative and I'm pretty sure that it's opening our ears and minds to many of the very urgent issues.

I was surprised to a certain extent listening to several of you, what appears to be the lack or the absence of participation of people with disabilities in the development and the design of web applications, and ‑‑ and the extent to which ‑‑ what is it that you believe we should be doing to ensure, as Mr. Kleeb said, not only work for persons with disabilities but work with them and what specific measures you think governments should put in place to ensure that people with disabilities are not necessarily spoken to, but engaged in the whole process from the beginning to the end.

And, again, thank you all and congratulations.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Okay. A third question and then we will let our panelists reply.

Any other question?

Okay, if not I let first Masahito answer the question that went to him.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you very much. Yeah, very good question. Actually, it was reported several years ago that Wikipedia was not so reliable, and there's several web pages with medical information, and Wikipedia actually ranks one of the lowest as far as the credibility is concerned.

And what is happening, I think in this area is to compile a more trustworthy credible database of information about medical ‑‑ especially income information and to provide that, you know, open source manner, and they have several such websites, like eMedicine and I ‑‑ I was looking at it, actually.

There was a report from a couple of doctors who did this research, actually, on the open ‑‑ openly available websites and ‑‑ and I couldn't find it now, but ‑‑ and as far as ITU, by the way, is concerned, we have this question 28, which is e‑health, multimedia e‑health services, and we are trying to compile also a database of information so that it would be usable by ‑‑ by countries as well as organizations so that we will have better, more credible and trustworthy information about medical and healthcare will be available.

So that's the current situation. Thank you.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you. On the question for Santiago from Canada. I will start with Catalina, the Special Rapporteur. What can governments do to increase the participation of people with disabilities in these processes?

>> CATALINA DEVANDAS: Thank you very much. Thank you for the question. I believe it's a very relevant one. I actually just produced a report on participation of persons with disabilities and the process of decision making that will be available for the next session of the Human Rights Council but I believe the question is quite important because you cannot design anything without consulting persons with disabilities and this means that persons with disabilities have to be engaged in every single part of process, and that means procurement, as has been mentioned, unless we know what are the needs and what are we going to be requiring from companies and developers and we need persons with disabilities to be engaged in that process of saying what kind of things we want to add as a requirement in the public procurement processes and the process of creating the standards.

Also, I think that Andrea mentioned that very well, we are talking about adaptability. We need to have solutions that are for everybody for that at least take into consideration the different needs of everybody. We had the last speaker talking about persons that are blind or that have visual impairments but we have to think about how to make it accessible for autistic people, to deaf people, to people with different learning disabilities. So we really need to consult with the different ‑‑ how do you say that, the different groups, the different constituencies otherwise this is not going to be adaptable and useful for everybody or at least as many people as possible.

And then, of course, we think ‑‑ I believe it's also important. It has to be affordable and that's one question in which persons with disabilities can also, I think, contribute and participate. Sometimes the signers think of very high level tech solutions which are not necessarily what we need to really access the services or the web.

It might be that the solutions are easier than we thought if we just put some common sense of it and common sense might be brought by persons with disabilities. I think by including persons with disabilities in all the process, not only in the design but also procurement in every single aspect of the process to get a website or to get any kind of service, it's important. It is an opportunity also and I believe it's extremely important for low and middle‑income countries and we should think about that. We need to make sure that this technology is not only reaching those that are in the developed world and those that have more challenges. In fact, this is an opportunity to make services accessible for a lost of people in the low and middle‑income countries. So I will leave it there.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: And I'm sure Andrea has something to say about how to increase the participation of people with disabilities. But this time in UN processes.

>> ANDREA SAKS: You always read my mind. We have a big, big obstacle, money. People with disabilities cannot afford to bring themselves to the ITU, and what Malcolm started with me years ago. We did allow an accessibility budget but Council Working Group can change that because they can actually make a category, if they would put their heads towards this where we do have an accessibility budget that deals with participation for persons with disabilities. Beat has been coming to question 26 which is the accessibility question in ITU‑T, the ITU‑D has a very good fellowship program, and it has a disability question for ‑‑ it's question 7 in Study Group 1. But it's not enough.

And if I had more money, I would bring in the world, because we need to listen to people that have specific things to say, because I don't know everything. Masahito doesn't know everything. You don't know everything. Basically if you don't have the problem, there are nuances that you don't fully grasp and when we write standards we do our best but often we have to go back and adapt them.

So what I would like to say, in terms of ITU, we are probably the leading agency in bringing in persons with disabilities to comment and contribute to standardization.

I haven't quite invaded ITU‑R successfully, but I'm pounding on the door. I love the giggle because they know I'm banging because there's certain areas where there's a mind‑set that they think ‑‑ and I don't mean this to any individual because we have the same problem in T and there are people in D that also have the same problem. That we are providing the best possible thought in ways forward in what we do. It's simply not true. Unless you have the shoes on your feet, you really don't know where you are walking or how you are walking.

I would like Council Working Group take into consideration that they in need a participation budget for persons with disabilities to attend the ITU and for this to go further into the UN so that we can have people apply to come with ‑‑ they don't have to have a doctorate they just have to have a willingness and experience and a wish to contribute to the work that's being done in the UN and here.

Thank you.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Before I ‑‑ sorry, I have a comment from the remote. As you know, in our meetings we have the participations and the remote moderator who is sitting in the back and she says there's a comment from the remote.

>> So Mr. Donal Rice would like to intervene.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: We would like Donal to make a comment.

>> DONAL RICE: Hi, just very briefly to support what Ms. Devandas and Ms. Saks said, in my experience in European standardization body, which is industry fora, which predominantly, the committees are occupied by people with industry, persons with disabilities very often find it very difficult to participate in those fora, not just because of the accessibility issues such as signing and captioning but also being involved in very, very technical standards, development. So it's a different way of participating than maybe being involved in policy development and I think one of the ‑‑ one of the issues there is around capacity within the sector to be able to hold those very technical conversations, but it's crucially important and I think one of the things that we have, we're now maybe ‑‑ (No audio).

 ‑‑ is the veracity of that standard and whether or not we got everything right in every clause of that standards and I think we missed some opportunities there.

I think in the USA, they have a different ‑‑ when it comes to Section 508 regulations, they have a different forum which is run by a government moderator, and I think there can be a greater presence of persons with disabilities during those committees, but I think it's a very difficult thing to be able to ask an already under resourced sector to be involved and sometimes very technical discussions but it's essential for the quality of the standards that they are.

Thank you.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Thank you. We are already over time. We will take two questions from the Russian Federation and Qatar.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a couple of comments. Andrea prompted to me some comments. First of all, I would like to say that we could use different ways to involve people with disables and one of the possible ways also to invite them to work in different kind of regional organizations and also use preparatory meeting for WTGC.

I would like all presentations but at the same time, I would like to mention that unfortunately, there's nobody on the podium from developing country. Also Andrea mentioned that maybe we should find a way ‑‑ and yeah. Catalina, but you are not staying in developing country anymore. I'm sorry.

(chuckles).

I'm also from Russia and I live in Geneva. I consider that I don't know many things in Russia.

Talking about ITU‑R. I saw various items to be included. Andrea provided a list of items from ITU‑T. Could you have add to that list ITU‑R Recommendation M1076, which is wireless communication systems for persons with impaired hearing and some other material.

Already, I think there's some material that's not mentioned. And thank you very much again.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Just one second because we are over time. We have a final question from Qatar. We will have the full day and in the coffee break we can have the responses. I will give the floor to Qatar and then I will let the deputy Secretariat close this panel.

>> QATAR: Thank you. I would like to thank you for convening this meeting and I would like to thank the speakers for their informative presentations. I have one question, I want to know how could we increase the promotion of accessibility in developing countries since we know that it's required financial resources.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Okay. If you will allow me, I will let Beat, would you like to take that question?

>> BEAT KLEEB: I guess I will respond to that with a question to all of you. How many are you ‑‑ how many of you are voluntarily here? How many of you are not being paid to be here?

That's the situation of people with disabilities in almost all situations. So with my experience, people ‑‑ people with disabilities are getting invited to discuss and to contribute and they are expected to come as volunteers.

At the same time, they have to also work another job to actually make a living. So we have to look at providing equal levels of participation, which means equal levels of payment for everyone's time to participate and consult.

On a personal level, if I didn't happen to live in Switzerland, know English and be involved in technology, the World Federation of the Deaf would not be here. And I thank ITU, Malcolm and Andrea for giving me the opportunity to be here. They have given us the opportunity. Please do the same thing in your countries. Thank you.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Sorry. I'm sorry we cannot take more questions but we will continue during the coffee break and we will stay here, but, you know, in ITU, we undertake to be on time. We are in Switzerland, so we have to be on time.

I would like to thank all the panelists for their interventions and sharing their experiences and I will hand the floor over to our Deputy Secretary General and we will resume at 11:30 with a short presentation on ITU's accessibility, and then we will continue with the rest of the session. With that, I hand it over to Malcolm. Thank you for joining us.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL: One thing we have been doing to try to involve more persons with disabilities in developing countries which we know from the statistics that the majority are in the developing countries, is to hold workshops in the developing countries. We started doing that in 2009. I think we had an event in Bamako, for example. And I recall I was there.

Very different expectations of persons with disabilities in developing countries compared to those in the developed countries because we had, for example, representatives of organizations looking at the needs of persons with leprosy. And shortly after that, we had an event on accessibility in Washington, and the contrast between the two is incredible to experience. And so really, we do need to have more events in the developing countries which will allow persons with disabilities there to more easily participate in the work.

But in Secretariat, you know, we are ‑‑ we are fully aware of the need to have the involvement of persons with disabilities in our work. We can't address their needs without them and consulting them.

And so we make every effort to do that by facilities such as captioning and sign language.

As much as possible, certainly in all the meetings we have been addressing accessibility but in all of our meetings, we tend to have captioning in most of our meetings not just those dealing with accessibility. But as Andrea mentioned, of course, it comes down to money. Remember, a few years ago when I was DSP director putting a request to council on the budget for ‑‑ to covering accessibility, captioning and sign language and facilities, et cetera. It's a problem ITU, as most organizations has difficulty with managing with the budget we have, but we make every effort to address this issue with our limits resources.

And going back to another initiative we took back in 2008, was to create a voluntary fund to help us cover some of these costs.

I have to say, even though that fund has been established for, what, six years, eight years, it's very disappointing that only two countries have ever contributed to that fund, Rwanda and Cyprus.

So please do anything you can to encourage more countries to contribute to that fund.

So I'm sure you are all desperate for a coffee. Let me just, again, thank all the speakers of the panel, really, extremely interesting presentations. Thank you all very much for your active participation in the discussion and thank Jose Maria for bringing us to a conclusion not too late from the schedule.

So thank you all very much. Enjoy your coffee.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: We break for coffee break and come back at 11:30.

(Coffee break).

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: Okay. We are going to continue with a short presentation to give an overview to this group on ITU's current activity on the area of accessibility. We have a presentation following the comment before from the Russian Federation. All slides will be uploaded to the portal of the Working Group, so you will have access to all slides including this one. And I will hand over to my colleagues. We will start with ITU‑T, Xiaoya Yang, please say next when you want to change the slide.

>> XIAOYA YANG: Thank you very much. I'm Xiaoya Yang.

Next slide, please.

Standardization sector of the ITU, our work on accessibilities, focusing on two aspects. The first aspects is to mainstream accessibility in information and communication technologies. The second aspect of our work is to make ourself accessible to people with disabilities.

First work to make standards on ICT accessibility and to promote the implementation of these standards, well‑known part of our work is to make standards. The next slide I will talk about are some of our recent products.

Also in making ourself accessible, we have our long‑time practice that to ask the standards developers to check their work from the beginning with our check list to try to implement universal design principle in the whole standardization process.

Also, together with other international standardization organizations, like ISOIOC, we have a joint policy on standardization and accessible and we jointly published guideline for addressing this accessibility in standards.

Also, we promote ‑‑ we provide remote participation to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in ITU‑T work. This practice also latches to our technical people, summarizing the most important points to guiding this exercise which also will be demonstrated in the next slide.

Also, we have practiced in the ITU as the first sector which provided reasonable accommodation for specific needs from people with disabilities, such as captioning, sign language interpretation, and fellowship from the limited ITU‑T budget.

Next slide, please.

This is our recent standards on accessibility. The latest ones are the top four. The first one is our accessibility profile for IPTV system, accessible terms and definitions and the next two are technical papers, guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all and guidelines for accessible meetings.

Other work are relatively older such as ITU‑T F is the 379 which is a telecommunications accessibility guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities.

And disaster relief, there are requirements for announcing the disasters, the emergency situations, especially taking care of people with disabilities.

Next slide, please.

This slide shows the ongoing work item after those achieved already in the last slide.

Next slide, please.

Other than the outcome which we have already achieved and ongoing, this slide shows the entities and events which are happening in the ITU‑T, how this work is organized.

In studly group 2, we have a question 4, which works on human factors.

In Study Group 16, we have a question 26, and 16 targeting accessibility.

And then we have Study Group 9, 16, and ITU‑R Study Group 5.

We organize these types of meetings for these questions, every six to eight months. Other than that, we will organize workshops showcasing events and challenges to promote the development of applications and devices implementing the ITU‑T standards.

In the end, I would mention that there is a Dynamic Coalition of accessibility and disability of the Internet Governance Forum, which is not an ITU entity, but the ITU volunteered to everybody as its secretary. This DCAD has been organizing meetings annually since IGF in 2007.

Next slide, please. I want to mention specifically the Joint Coordination Activity On Accessibility and Human Factors which was shared by madam Andrea Saks. This is a coordinating issues related to people with disabilities, not only in ITU‑T, but now is also helping work with other sectors in the ITU.

It had organized 18 meetings since 2007. And the next meeting will be during June 2016, during Study Group 16.

Thank you for this opportunity and I will hand over to my colleagues of BDT, Susan. Thank you.

>> SUSAN SCHORR: Thank you very much, and good morning to everyone. I'm just going to stand up so you can see me. I noticed that some people were having trouble finding out where the speakers were coming from. We are in the back of the room.

My name is Susan Schorr and I head the special initiatives division in the BDT, the development sector, and we are responsible for digital inclusion of people with specific needs including persons with disabilities, women and girls, youth and children and indigenous peoples, and I work very closely with my colleague Roxana Witmer who is sitting next to me.

Next slide, please.

I will skip this slide in the interest of time, and go to the next slide and just to say that in the D sector, in BDT, we have been working very hard over the past several years to assist ITU members both government members and members from the private sector to better understand what we mean by accessibility and what we can do to promote ICT accessibility, very much in line with the UN Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9 provisions.

We have three key publications, which if you have a look at the making television accessible report, and the making mobile phones and services accessible report will explain to you what accessibility means in the context of television and mobile phones, and then the model ICT accessibility policy report was developed very much to assist members to transpose their Article 9 obligations under the convention into national law, and you may have noticed just outside the room, we have a standing banner that also has images of all of our reports and the online links that you can find.

Many of these reports are available in the many languages of ITU and they are also available in accessible formats.

Since this council Working Group is looking at access to the Internet by persons with disabilities, I thought you might be most interested about the web accessibility policy that we have developed and I would encourage everyone to have a look at this.

Now, what the web accessibility policy does, is it marries the standards that my colleague Xiaoya was talking about, with the policy issues that governments can implement, and it calls for governments to do an analysis of all of their websites, to determine which ones are accessible, which ones are not, develop a transition plan to bring those inaccessible websites into conformance with the WCAG guidelines, and as Andrea was mentioning this morning, it would call for staff training of website developers and as Donal Rice mentioned, updating procurement policies so that when governments are procuring web services that they can include accessible websites as a requirement in their procurement guidelines.

We also recognize that it's important to have testing tools once accessible websites are developed and this should include using persons with disabilities it test those websites. We also suggest that the policies be monitored and reporting be done on an annual basis, and that policies should be developed in consultation with persons with disabilities, and, of course, to conduct periodic review to take into consideration technological developments.

To respond just to a couple of the comments from this morning's discussion, one of the requests was how can we involve persons with disabilities more in our work? And what our model policy suggests is that governments create a committee on ICT accessibility that would be comprised of persons with disabilities and other key stakeholders.

This was also a comment that many governments have web accessibility. But BDT is conducting a survey, to find out how many have ICT accessible. The initial results are that only 40 governments do so.

This was a question about money. This suggests that governments could be using universal service funds to fund some of these activities. Next slide and my last slide.

We have many, many, many other activities and sometime doesn't allow me to get into great detail on all of them, but we do have an online course on public procurement of accessible ICTs. We are developing a course on accessible audio visual media. And the Arab CIS and Europe region. We also have an active Americas group.

And there in Study Group d, we are seeking the best strategies and policies and projected developed by ITU members. This competition was launched at the last meeting in September and since there have been so many wonderful contributions to this council Working Group, we would invite any of you who have submitted to the council Working Group to also submit to our competition just to specify that we are looking for implemented successful projects, policies and practices and if you would like to contribute you can go to the ITU‑D Study Group website and click on contributions. Thank you very much.

>> JUNKO KOIZUMI: Okay. Thank you. My name is Junko Koizumi, and I'm with the radio communications bureau. I would like to present the ITU‑R accessibility.

ITU‑R contributed to the production of presentations, reports, questions and handbooks relating to persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs.

Also for the participation to the ITU‑R meeting an English captioning has been provided since late 2013. And in addition to the live captioning, captioning transcripts archive which enable to access after the session have been available since late 2015.

Next slide, please.

I will introduce more details on study on ICT accessibility at ITU‑R Study Groups. First Study Group one which studies spectrum management is currently carrying out studies for harmonization on short range devices which are also used for aids for the hearing impaired.

Study Group 1 created these report.

Next Study Group 5, is carrying out technical and operational characteristics of wireless hearing aid systems. Study Group 5 developed those recommendations and the question on this subject.

Next slide, please.

At last Study Group 6, which studies broadcasting services is currently carrying out studies for broadcasting service accessibility, such as subtitles and audio description. Study Group 6 developed this report and recommendations and handbooks on the subject and also Study Group 6 actively participates in the ITU intersector group, collaborating with Study Group 6 and 9 and 16. In addition, Study Group 6 chairman actively created to the UEFA, it's a European football games. They thank you. That's all.

>> JOSE MARIA DIAZ BATANERO: We have, first, a number of activities cross sector, we will have sectoral activities where they work together with the Secretariat. So you have it in one slide now. Next one. That one. So just a few bullets to summarize. As you already know, the Connect 2020 agenda has a target on accessibility. So they are working together to measure the accessible goal. All countries should have accessibility laws by 2020.

40 countries have responded to the survey and we will be working on the next few years on implementing this code.

We are also participating regularly in the meetings of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly on the committee on the rights of persons with disabilities and the State Party that happens in New York, as well as in the network of UN agencies that support the convention.

We also have as the Deputy Secretary General fund. We have a number of projects funded with this fund and we continue doing fund‑raising. We also have an accessibility policy to improve accessibility to ITU services, to staff, delegates, persons with disabilities. To some of the services that you are seeing today, like captioning and rooms, et cetera, are the result of this policy, which is a policy of government and improvement. We know that full accessibility is our goal. Hopefully we will achieve it, soon, hopefully, but it is a constant improve. It's having in mind the need to provide reasonable accommodations to our meetings, products, publications, document, et cetera.

And then finally, we also work as one ITU on a number of outreach, advocacy and communication activities.

So with this, we give closure to this presentation. I will hand over the floor to ‑‑ maybe you can explain what will happen?

Okay. So with, that we close the segment of this opening presentation. Sorry we have to do the presentation after the coffee break. To maximize the intervention of our speakers presentations. With this we give closure to the opening panel and I will give the floor to the floor of the opening group who will be adopting the agenda. We will open the meeting formally. With that, thank you.

>> CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I'm pleased to welcome you all to the physical component of the council Working Group on international Internet. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Malcolm Johnson, deputy secretary of the ITU, for his always valuable help with the Working Group and the invaluable efforts and support of his team.

I apologize this morning for not being early morning in this meeting. I was fully engaged in an official visit yesterday back home in Saudi Arabia.

Also, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to the panelists, the experts for their valuable contribution, also for our moderator, Mr. Jose Maria for his valuable work this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the last Council Working Group meeting, it was decided to hold an open consultation on an important topic, which is the access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs. The World Health Organization states that 15% of the world population are with disabilities however, information and communication technologies have the potential for making significant improvements in the life of these people, allowing them to address the social and economic and by enlarging the scope of activities available to them.

Many of us in this room involved in drafting the global agenda during the Plenipotentiary 2014, and I can recall one the targets and the goal inclusiveness is to ensure the accessibilities for the persons with disabilities should be established by all countries by 2020.

Last but not least, the sustainable development goals provides special attention to persons with disabilities in a number of ways. In particular, people including persons with disabilities have equal access to ICTs.

Having said that ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to our interactive and constructive discussion you are during the physical consultation meeting. And now I would like to bring your attention to the agenda to request the approval and to start the work of the open consultation.

United Kingdom.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you, Chair and good morning to everybody. It's good to be here again. It's good to see so many contributions on such an interesting and valuable topic and we would just like also to say thank you to the panelists who already have given some really interesting presentations this morning.

Just on the agenda, we are happy with the agenda, but I think council Working Group in the past has agreed that we should use there are open meeting to ask stakeholders if they have any suggestions for future topics for consultation and perhaps somewhere on the agenda, perhaps around any other business, we can take the opportunity to ask stakeholders if they have any ideas for future topics and we can discuss it in the Working Group later this week.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, United Kingdom. Canada.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Chairman and welcome to Geneva. Mr. Chairman, we would like to support the suggestion, the request by the United Kingdom. As we heard, stakeholders have made a considerable effort ‑‑ (No audio).

>> CHAIR: With that, I would propose to include the request for proposals from stakeholders and future topics to be undertaking under item agenda number 5. Any other businesses?

That's acceptable. We can go ahead and approve the agenda. Thank you very much. I see no comments. The agenda is approved.

(Gavel).

Now, we are on item number 3, and before that, I would like to recall that ITU council 2015 session resolved that the relevant inputs from the open online consultation on the topics decided by the council Working Group Internet would form the basis of discussion at the physical open consultation meeting and this regard, responses to the online open consultation on the topic access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs, were received from 49 stakeholders, 21 governments, six private sector entities, 14 from civil society representatives, including representatives of the person with disabilities, three international organizations and five academia.

The responses demonstrate a variety of rich inputs from a wide range of stakeholders. The different challenges and gaps were identified, that are faced by persons with disabilities with accessing and using ICTs. Numerous good practices were shared and Recommendations were made on how the global community and in particular governments can address this important social issue.

All responses received were made and remain publicly available in the ITU website and consolidated document was published online prior to the physical open consultation meeting.

The document number OPCWGINT2/2 is the document ‑‑ is the consultation document.

Based on the responses on the previous consultation meeting, which was held in 2015, the Secretariat included in the online submission, for special request for a short summary, in case of lengthy contributions. The summaries we received have been included and are clearly indicated in the combined document, while also ‑‑ while also including a hyper link to the full length of contribution.

I will also point out that today's meeting is being live captioned and providing American Sign Language interpretation. Therefore, I would like to request everyone taking the floor to declare every time their name, affiliation, and talk slowly and clearly in order to ensure effective provision of the mentioned services.

And now I would like to open the floor to the respondents to the online consultation who wish to present their online responses. I will follow the order of submission as it also appears in the compiled document, which will be distributed.

Due to the large number of responses each speaker will be given approximately three minutes, maximum. I will then open the floor for very quick comments with regard to each specific submission. The main discussion will take place after all responses have been presented.

I would like also to point out that PowerPoints are not necessary but should you wish to use power points kindly send it to the Secretariat to make it available on the screen.

For those entities that participated in the online consultation, but are unrepresented today, I would propose ‑‑ I will invite the meeting to look at the summary, which will be presented on the screen.

With, that I would like to open the floor to the online consultation, on site or connected remotely who wish to elaborate more on their responses.

First, I would be giving the floor to Mr. Kyle Miers from Australia due to the time differences. So I would like to ask Mr. Kyle to take the floor, please.

Yes, you can start Mr. Kyle.

Can you hear us?

>> Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for this opportunity. Can you see me now?

>> CHAIR: Yes, we can.

>> Yes, thank you for this participation for me to talk about the perspective of the deaf community and access to information. I will be looking back and forth between the camera and the screen to make sure that the interpreter is interpreting me correctly because I'm not sure how well I'm seen over this long distance.

Information is very important to all communities and in lieu of the UN CRPD, especially because we have 160 signatories already, should mean that a lot of the information, most of which we receive over the Internet notably video information, we should notice that most of the videos that are distributed over the Internet do not have captioning or subtitling and this is contrary to the UN CRPD.

If you look at WCAG, 2.0a, there's no minimum requirement for the quality of video. So there's no minimum requirement for video accessibility. This means that a lot of businesses, organizations, governments, stakeholders and the like, do not feel like they have to provide accessibility in this form.

Now, if you look at the same standard but AA, what you actually see when you look on the Internet is there are voice recognition technologies for subtitling which you have seen on YouTube. In Australia and the UK and the United States, we have different accents. So this voice recognition, which is one machine that tries to understand all different types of accents and the same language is often going to have, many, many, long.

We don't have any type of best practice in this area yet. Most of us here at the deaf organization that I work at actually look at transcripts and will use a transcript of a video to then place subtitles on the Internet.

There's also very little use of sign language videos on the Internet. Many people who are interested in learning sign language don't use sign language videos to obtain information online, and this is actually very dangerous, because there's a high chance that it will be misunderstood. So what we are seeing essentially is that spoken language and sign language are being ‑‑ there's a huge discrepancy of what we see online and oftentimes this is because of the misconception, that sign language are representations of spoken language.

So if we look at WCAG 2.0 standards I think we ought to just move on to 2a and get rid of a because there is no minimum requirements for captioning for online videos.

AA should have a minimum guide lines including best practices and the same for AAA. We need to have best practice and ‑‑ best practice and some guidelines.

Now, putting that aside, one thing that I haven't mentioned my document that I provided was that now we are using three or four different protocols for me to use in this meeting. We are using Adobe connect. We are using Skype. I'm also using on my other screen the caption streaming. So there's no standard for deaf people. We are having to do this ad hoc thing on the highest level. So what we need to do is to try to combine some of these things.

Now, on telecommunications, we do have these standards. So why don't we have them in video protocol over Internet? And this causes deaf people a lot of difficulty and problem. Thank you very much for your time and for allowing me to opportunity to express point of view of the deaf community.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Kyle Miers for this contribution and thank you for sharing with us some of the challenges that were captured in the use of ICT.

With respect to the quality of video, there is no designed standards or minimum requirements for captioning on the online video.

Also, with respect to the voice recognition and the lack of best practices and guidelines. I don't want to take much time but I will ask if there under comments based on the information of Mr. Kyle Miers. The floor is yours.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Hi, this is Andrea Saks. I have a feedback problem. Can you hear me all right?

I wanted to say thank you very much for bringing this forward and making a point of what you have made about standards. There is something that I think also needs to be said. Where he do a standard called the accessibility check list and within that standard there are some ‑‑ there is a recommendation on frames per second so that sign language can be adequately interpreted so that it was written by Gooden Healthner of Sweden. That's the only standard regarding video that I'm aware of. I would like to say that we will communicate through the Dynamic Coalition and also through the JCA to say that we need to make a standard for a guideline or a technical paper regarding captioning in videos over the web.

And also elaborate on that other bold standard that people have forgotten. I will take this on Boyd and take it to the joint coordination activity on accessibility and human factors because you have brought it to the fore.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Andrea Saks.

WFD, please.

>> WFD: Beat Kleeb, speaking for the World Federation for the Deaf. I fully support what Kyle Miers says about captioning. Here in Switzerland, Internet sites are certified for WCAG AA standards but ‑‑ but they do not have any captions at all. So this is one example where it's a current real life situation with ‑‑ where standards are being complied with and they are completely unaccessible. This is a fundamental problem. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Kleeb.

Chad, please.

>> CHAD: Thank you very much. I have a call, I apologize. I do not have my channel of English.

First of all, my name is Azka, a member of the Chadan division.

Thank you very much for your presentation of international Internet‑related public policy issues. So my question is this: English is the official language of the ITU or is it French? Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Chad. If I understand correctly, there's a comment with respect to providing the six official languages ‑‑ language interpretation in this meeting. The requirements when establishing the council Working Group on Internet, it was decided to be in the English language due to financial resource matters, and as a result also the consultation which is part of the activities of the council Working Group is undertaken in the English language.

We could take a look into this matter in the future in the discussion of the council Working Group meeting or in the council. Thank you very much.

Okay. Thank you very much. I would like to express my thanks again to Mr. Kyle Miers for his contribution and his presentation.

And with that, I would like to take the ‑‑ or look into the compiled document and I would like to ask the association for proper Internet governance to present their contribution.

>> Thank you, chairman. Richard Hill here. Our contribution focuses on the fourth of the specific issues that is what is the role of governments in addressing accessibility. Before I turn to my contribution, I would like to say that I have read all of the submissions and I found that on this particular issue, they were remarkably consistent and I found four themes that emerged in terms of what governments can and should do. One is, of course, regulation, but that does not necessarily mean new regulation because we all know that offline law applies equally online and so discrimination online is no more permissible than it is offline.

There is an issue of affordability by the users of measures for accessibility, but also by companies that need to update their websites or whatever. So funding is something that can and should be looked at by governments. Of course education and awareness building, and a very important point that was raised over and over again, the role model, the government websites should be models of accessible which unfortunately, they are not always.

These points came up again and again and they are summarized very nicely for me, anyway in three contributions one from Egypt on January 15, one from Mexico on January 20 and the one from Australia posted on February 2. Now, what I wanted to do really in my contribution is to focus not on those specifics but on the general frame, would and in my paper, I refer to the well‑known UN Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I point out that it has over obligations for states, including electronic services and emergency services. So clearly this obligation does apply to ICTs and the Internet.

And then I wanted to point out that there is a specific obligation that at least a large number of Member States, if not all Member States, in the international telecommunications regulations whose Article 12 states that Member States should promote access for persons with disabilities, taking into being the relevant ITU regulations and the contribution lists a number of recommendations and then it also points out as others have, that there is a resolution 2070 of the world telecommunications standardization assembly, also calls for measures to improve accessibility.

Now, I recognize that several of the people in this room or at least some of the people in this room were in Dubai with us. I think a certain number of Member States did not sign the ITU‑Rs in Dubai and they had objections on certain articles. There's been some legal analysis of these objections and now it seems clear at least that to legal scholars that the legal ‑‑ from the legal point of view, there's no particular reason not to adhere or exceed to the ITU‑Rs and in case there are any doubts about interpretations of those controversial articles I'm proposing a text at the end that has the correct interpretation. So I would suggest that perhaps the time has come to, in the context of accessibility recognize that this article also should exceed to.

Thank you, chairman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Richard Hill, for presenting the submission association of property Internet Governance.

Now, I would like to open the floor for any quick comments.

Russia, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We consider that there are several ITU instruments and regulations that are useful as a result of the problem that we are discussing now and ITU‑R is one of those and we support that it should be used when we are trying to resolve the problem of accessibility for people with specific needs.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Russia. We have a remote participant.

>> Yes, there is Patricia Schlageter, and they would like to intervene.

>> CHAIR: Yes, please.

>> Sorry, we are trying to connect him. Let me speak with him. One moment.

I'm sorry. Unfortunately, he's still connecting so would you like to carry on?

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Once he's connected we could take his intervention.

Any more comments with respect to the submission of APIG?

Okay. With that, I would like to express my thanks again to Mr. Richard Hill for this valuable contribution and I would like to move to the second submission, it's submitted by the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association in Denmark.

Are they presenting in the meeting?

So could we just ‑‑ is that from the screen?

United States.

>> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to all colleagues. We just wanted to intervene to say it might be helpful if we read the summaries out loud. I understand that we have them available on the screen, but given the number of visually impaired individuals who may be participating it may be helpful to read them out loud as well.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, for this proposal. Actually that was the plan earlier, but I noticed that some of the summaries are too long. Some of them two to three pages but I would read maybe the short summaries and we are trying to give the opportunity for those who are not able to represent their submission at least to be looked at by the screen, by the participants.

I will read the short. Hearing aid users cannot use headsets, headphones like normal hearing people. A large number ever apps are based on this functionality. In workplaces, trains, airplanes, et cetera, you cannot use loud speakers as you are not expected to disturb others. That takes you back to item one, headsets or head phones. Number three, YouTube uploads enormous amounts of content every minute. The trend is increasing and a large portion of this content requires that it be streamed to the ear, streaming videos and conferences and more. Four, some security codes are sent using audio for the visually impaired. If you are both visually and hearing impaired and a huge number are, this is unfortunate as others may listen in on the security code.

So this is some of the observation or the response of the European hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association.

With, that I would like to move to the third submission. Malawi Council for the Handicapped. Are they present?

Okay. I will give the remote participants.

>> Hello? I'm taking the floor on behalf of telecommunications regulations of the Sri Lanka. I would like to thank ITU for giving me this opportunity. So based on our project experiences, we came to these projects. These are some key items we would like to highlight. During the previous session some of the speakers addressed some of the major challenges. I will not repeat them.

First one, affordability. Availability of acceptance ‑‑ assistance devices that is to encourage Windows‑assisted devices and software. Then poor computer literacy. And lack of software and teachers specialize courses and then job opportunities and employment opportunities.

And possible good practices are as follows: Look at the private, public partnership for funding. Corporate social responsibility initiatives of companies for funding opportunities. Development of human resources through quality programs and encourage research and development through local universities. The other thing is create a website with open course wear, catering to the needs of persons with disabilities to be established.

You explore special strategies for persons with disabilities. In fact, we have some operators giving special care packages, finally, special TV or radio for persons with disabilities.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your presenting your submission. I believe that was a presentation with respect to the telecommunications company of Sri Lanka, due to the connections I wanted to clarify that this is a representation of the submission, but I would like to thank our Distinguished Delegate from Sri Lanka for presenting their submission.

There are two submissions from Sri Lanka. The one, which I think was represented just now is item 10, and I would like to ‑‑ since it's already 12:35, I would like to stop the morning session, and I invite you to look at the submission of item 10 and if there is any comments we could start with the afternoon session with any comments with respect to the submission of the telecommunications regulatory commission of Sri Lanka. After that, we will continue with item number 3.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to seeing you in the afternoon session. The meaning is closed.

(End of session 12:36 p.m.)