```
                    FINAL FILE

                 ITU WSIS FORUM 2019
                      ROOM 1
                 ICT ACCESSIBILITY
        THE KEY TO INCLUSIVE GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

                   15:00 P.M. CET
                   APRIL 10, 2019
```

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
Welcome to the High-Level Dialogue in ICT Accessibility, the Key to
Inclusive Communication. We have today an outstanding panel of key
stakeholders and decisionmakers that will share with you their vision
on this topic.
    In the interest of time and to allow all of the great speakers
to share their message, I invite Dr. Kemal Huseinovic, Chief of the
Department of the Infrastructure, Enabling Environment and
E-Application Department, ITU-D. I invite him to give his
introductory remarks.
    >> KEMAL HUSEINOVIC: Thank you, Roxana. Honorable ministers,
distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.
Welcome to the high-level dialogue session of WSIS 2019 on ICT
Accessibility, the Key to Inclusive Communication.
As a U.S. specialized agency for information and communication
technology, International Telecommunication Union is committed to
connecting the world without discrimination. Let me highlight that
ITU is a neutral forum, for global dialogue to bring together,
policymakers, industry players, academia and other relevant

stakeholders with the aim to connect everyone, everywhere, every time.

Having in mind that ICT accessibility for people with disabilities is a global concern. It is also one of ITU's priorities confirmed during the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2017 and reiterated during the plenipotentiary conference 2018.

Inclusiveness is one of the ITU's five strategic goals set by the ITU membership, calling for enabling accessible environments for all, including for persons with disabilities by 2023.

It is essential to implement key treaties like the Convention on Rights of Persons With Disabilities to guarantee the success of the United Nations sustainable development goals, whose central premise is to leave no one behind.

I have to say ITU has pioneered the international work in this field, in particular the ICT accessibility.

In the 1990s, the Union established the standard V18 for deaf telecommunications.

This was a landmark standard, allowing different phone devices to communicate through text from different countries. This became the first step towards universal design for the accessibility of telecommunication products. Making accessibility of ICTs a reality requires a combination of technical standards, legal and regulatory frameworks.

ITU's Development Bureau has been contributing to the process of overcoming this global challenge through its work in the ICT accessibility field since the year of 2006.

During the past 13 years, ITU-D has developed a variety of activities for its membership to raise awareness, share good practices, knowledge, and information. In addition, BDT is investing a lot of efforts to strengthen the capacity in the ICT accessibility area, and provide concrete solutions to policymakers, regulators, and stakeholder around the world. This is one of the essential parts of building inclusive digital societies in their countries and regions.

In this regard, let me mention some of the key resources that ITU developed. A model ICT accessibility policy. 35 training courses online tutorials. And in-country programs to help countries make all websites accessible. Ladies and gentlemen, the part of the information technologies is immense. When ICTs are accessible, they can empower persons with disabilities to reclaim and live an independent life.

ICTs can facilitate and enrich all people's educational, social, and economic development. Policymakers, regulators, industry players, and other stakeholders have the ability and privilege to shape the future and contribute towards ensuring that the world of tomorrow is a world where all people have access to information and communication without discrimination.

ITU believes that the principles of universal design, availability, affordability and equal opportunities to use

accessible ICTs and assistive technologies are the key for building inclusive societies.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you success in your endeavors, and a fruitful discussion during this session. ITU is looking forward to working with all of you to achieve this global goal. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much, Dr. Kemal Huseinovic, for the wonderful remarks that already set the scene of the high-level dialogue.

I would only add that the digital inclusion division under the direction of our director Dr. Kemal Huseinovic seeks to empower ITU membership with the necessary resources regardless of age, gender, location, ability, or financial means can benefit from access, use and knowledge of ICTs and thereby be part of our global digital society.

Ms. Daniela Bas, in your quality as Director of Inclusive Social Development at the UNDESA, and also as a seasoned professional in social development and human rights also advise the Government of Italy and also the former vice president of European Commission and also in the capacity as a journalist.
Why do you think that ITU accessibility plays a key role in the global development of digital inclusive societies?

>> DANIELA BAS: Thank you, I'm a journalist, but I forgot how to switch it on. Sorry. It works. Thank you. Good afternoon.

Thank you very much, excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen for having invited me here, representing the Division For Inclusive Social Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and, above all, the focal points for the whole United Nations system that are hosted and dealt with and by the department. I'm talking about the focal points on major social groups that you somehow mentioned, Roxana.
DESA is the focal point for the Julian system on aging, on persons with disabilities, on indigenous people and their families, on cooperatives. So it has a huge portfolio.
When it comes to digital technology, the first thing that comes to my mind is a new language.

Young generations nowadays are learning this new language. Which is not the traditional language. Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, French, whatever you think of. It is a technological language, it's a new language. Are we sure that everybody is able to speak this new language? Or are we leaving someone behind?

And what is also the benefit of using technology and digital technology in this new era, which is the fourth Industrial Revolution. There are many questions I ask myself.

Allow me, it might be scattered speech, but I would like to touch on a few points with you. When it comes to these social groups I just mentioned, as we know demographically speaking, the world is aging, so we have to make sure that older people -- I'm getting there, in two years I will be 60. U.N. defines older people as those that

are 60 years or above. So I'm getting there.

So we have to give this instrument of learning this new language to older people. Not necessarily everybody is able to use it.

And we also know that often age -- not always -- brings with it some kinds of disabilities.

So technology and digital technology can be extremely helpful when it comes to contacting, for instance, your medical doctor. Nowadays we're working more and more on that or your bank. So on, services to order food. There are many ways we can use technologies, in general. But if we are older and if we have a disability, digital technology can help us a great deal to do these things and more.

However, we have to make sure that people are able to use technology and these different various new technological languages. Otherwise, what happens is we go back to 100 years ago, at least in western countries, where people were not able to attend school with the exception of a few. And when they had to sign a document, they were signing the document with an X.

So nowadays with the new nontraditional languages, unless we make sure that older generations or other generations that might not have access to digital technology because it is expensive or because there is no broadband or for various reasons, they might not be able to sign the new digital documents. So what happens that we go back to 100 years ago, where people were signing with an X, with the exception of new generations or older generations or people who are without disabilities, who, for various reasons, have been educated to use these new languages.

So this is one thing I wanted to share with you. When it is time to stop, please tell me. Because I could go on for -- and then when I think of the use of digital technologies and persons with disabilities, for instance, I think that the number of persons with disabilities increases daily. How, why? Just think of the conflicts, wars, and natural disasters that happen on a daily basis. Usually, you have the idea of the persons with disabilities use a wheelchair or visually impaired or might have some behavioral issues or invisible disabilities that we don't see, I don't know, such as diabetes or epilepsy or something else.

But actually this is just an image we have, an idea, a stereotype, but because of what is happening in the world with the many conflicts and wars and natural disasters, the number of persons with disabilities is increasing dramatically. And there, digital technology can play an incredible role, particularly when it comes to natural disasters, to find ways whenever an alarm is given, either through television, radio, computer, mobile phone, else, it has to be accessible to all persons with disabilities. And I'm referring particularly here to those that might have sensory disabilities, visually impaired persons or persons with hearing difficulties. But also persons that might have dyslexia. Not necessarily might be able to read quickly what is written in a show when you have, you know, how do you call them? Breaking news. You write it down there. But not necessarily some people are able to appreciate what is happening

there or in their mobile phone, et cetera.
So there are three things that we should be considering. Now I need my iPad, sorry.

So, yes. First of all -- now I also need to wear my glasses -- we said that the three elements we should keep in our mind when we talk about digital technologies that we said are spreading. But there are digital gaps that remain between persons with and without disabilities. There are many statistics I could be giving you. We recently issued a flagship on disability and statistics on many areas of life. Particularly looking at the convention on the rise of persons with disabilities and its 30 Articles. So the research has been done through that. And how this also impacts the 2030 agenda.

So if you want to know more, you can have access to this flagship that has been recently published. So three elements, the first one is to make sure that the technologies have to be accessible, have to be affordable by persons with disabilities. Not everybody can benefit of that. We have to make sure that Governments have their websites accessible. Only 32% of the 193 countries that are members of the United Nations have their websites accessible.

So when these groups are affected, many others have also to suffer. Therefore, let's promote the principles of universal design. Let's promote also the guidelines prepared by WHO and ITU on this. They're amazing. If you're not familiar with them, please do ask your colleagues here. An ICL is a representative there with WHO, congratulations for this result.

Let's also keep encouraging funding mechanisms to support the development of open source softwares. This can be particularly useful in areas where commercially available software may not be affordable to persons with disabilities.
Similarly, social responsibility departments of large corporations can support these efforts by dedicating more resources to the issue of digital inclusion to support universal design, open source software, and low-cost assistive ICT and definitely, let's keep working at the United Nations. We have the space. We give the space to promote U.N. policies and accountable mechanisms on disabilities.
Thank you very much.
(Applause)

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much, Ms. Bas. Do you know that accessible are the only type of ICT, from inclusiveness perspective, consider equity and equality? Which is vital to make sure persons with disabilities benefit from equal access from information and technology and products and services like people without disabilities.

So to achieve this ambitious goal, countries and regions make efforts to develop accessible environments.
Ms. Inmaculada Porrero, you are the senior expert of the Disability and Inclusion Unit of the Director General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion of the European Nation.
Based on your over 20 years' experience of assistive technologies

and ICT technologies for peoples with disabilities. What is the concrete steps in terms of policy and regulation that Europe has done towards building accessible environments, and which one can be considered or replicated in other regions, in your opinion?

    >> INMACULADA PORRERO: Okay. We have been really working hard to get an accessibility ecosystem. Policy and legal ecosystem to tackle the challenges my predecessor, Daniela Bas, has greatly described many of the challenges we are facing today with the use of technology.
And our aim with work and tools I'm going to briefly introduce to you has been to remove those barriers that hinder persons with disabilities to participate in the digital society. On equal basis with others. And by participating in the digital society, you get also access to the real world. Because today, technology has really permeated all of our lives and environments.

    We have developed and in fact, I can share with you that just today, we had the formal adoption at European level of a new piece of legislation called the European Accessibility Act. This is one of the key pieces of legislation that we are putting in place. It contains a specific obligations for, on one hand, ICT products. We're talking about telephones, computers, operating systems. We're talking about eReaders of books. Self-service terminals. The directed legislation puts clear obligations on accessibility, on economic operators. Similarly, once you have the products, you need to have the services. And we are putting obligations on 70 providers, on telecommunications, on broadcasting, on banking, e-commerce.
Imagine all e-commerce websites will have to be accessible from a certain date in Europe. e-Books, how well that complements all of the international efforts around markets. We will not only take books and make them accessible, now we will have on the market newly placed books being accessible from the beginning, in Europe.

    This is really a major step forward. In addition, we have obligations for public sector to have the websites accessible. Now, this are specific accessibility pieces of legislation, but they are also complemented with, let's say, all the legislation and policies that gives more of a carrot. That is for example, public procurement. In Europe, it is an obligation to buy accessible. And if you use the requirements that we have in the legislation that I mentioned before, then you know you will comply with that obligation.

    So if you are a company and a business that is making accessible products, your efforts will be rewarded because public authorities will buy your products. Not only that, in addition, European funds, the European Social Investment Funds require also accessibility. So when European funding is spent, that needs to be done in a way that it is accessible.
Whatever you are going to be using that funds for, whether it is to build infrastructure, whether it is to give courses, whether it is to develop websites, whatever. It has to be accessible. So we have three key elements of legislation policies. Direct obligations to

the businesses. Second obligations to public authorities to buy accessible. And a reward for industry. And third, the use of European funds.

This is very much complemented with sector-specific legislation. Telecom legislation also requires provisions for equivalent access for example.

Or broadcasting legislation needs to have -- it is having in Europe now -- requirements for accessibility of TV programs, for example.

So we have a complete ecosystem that is coherent, we use the same requirements across the system and also complementing each other. Very important.

Of course, in order to make that work, we need to accompany that with some practical solutions. We're developing standards. We have some European standards already that describe in more detail what is accessibility, but also training. And on that we're partnering, for example, with ITU. We think it is very important to have this partnerships with international organizations, also international standardization organizations. We have got here, also in the panel, WC3Y.

So it is really creating -- the message is really creating an ecosystem that is coherent and complementary. Of course, technology -- I'm talking about efforts at European level. Technology is global. Accessibility of technology is a global requirement.

So we need -- we are working to maximize the corporation, the coordination, the exchanges of good practices. Because at the end, the technology that we will see around the world will be accessible only if it can be used for communicating across the globe and being shared with people across the globe.

So these are my main messages, thank you, Roxana.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much, Inmaculada Porrero.

I would like to make a precision, perhaps for those of you who are not very familiar with the terminology of what "accessible ICT" means. Because we're talking about this goal, about the fact that they bring the equity component in addition to the equality one.

So the accessible ICTs are the ICTs who have embodied accessibility features from the design stage of fabrication of this equipment that enable person like older people, young people, deaf people or with hard of hearing to use the same device using different features.

But also, you can use it because of the circumstances. Perhaps you don't want to disturb your neighbor so you just want to see actually the captioning or subtitling of the video.

So therefore, we do consider that this accessible ICTs are the ones that actually will ensure inclusiveness in the future.

And on this tone, I will say that globally, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the information society is not necessarily only in the mandate of ministers of telecommunications. In some countries, for instance, it falls under the mandate of

international departments or ministries of social affairs or of Ministry of Health, which is also the case in Government of Spain.

So, Dr. Miguel Angel Valero, you are the Director of Ceapat-Imserso, which is the Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs and Social Welfare. In your over 20 years of experience in digitalization and evaluation of accessible ICT systems and services to enable the health and social care of people with disabilities and older person. What are Spain best practices and key challenges to ensure accessible and sustainable ICT development that contributes to the social participate of all people in the information society?

>> MIGUEL ANGEL VALERO: Good afternoon. Thank you, Roxana. Thanks, ITU, and persons that make this summit on information society to happen.
I'm very proud, I'm very honored to represent today Ceapat-Imserso. It is like the national center of technology for all. This is a public body established by the Spanish Government 30 years ago in 1989. So I could say that this has been sustainable from a social, economical, and ecological point of view. Ceapat is the national center so that all the city sense, entities, companies, universities, people, persons with disabilities can come to ask for advice, assessment, adaptation of assistive and accessible technologies and document publication for all.

This is why this experience for us is very -- we are very proud to share, because we have a lot of contacts with other countries and we need to have financial point that the disabled to provide in a stable way, knowledge, background and even design for all approaches.

We are a team of engineers, architects, psychologies, occupational therapies, speech therapies, documentalists and administer staff. This is the way that we are able to give service, a public open service to more than 10 thousand people per year and one hundred thousand people with access to the convention.
This is a big challenge. We have here over 2,000 accessible technologies and ICT and accessible ICTs are able to make other things accessible and they should be accessible by themselves.

The challenge is how to get the population close to the emerging assistive technologies and accessible technologies, some are maintenance one, and others people need specific devices. We as a public center where everybody can access to offer that service. Along the 30 years we have been able to adapt to emerging technologies and give you information on things done in a proper way for many, many years, like the ITU technology presented in the beginning.

I would like to share the audience our hand as a Spanish Government body to be able to replicate this model. Why do we believe in accessibility sustainability? Because it is a must be service in cooperation with other public and private entities, international bodies that are represented here.
People don't know what is the Resolution for me. When they come to Ceapat-Imserso we give the assessment or show the way to other emerging technologies free advice to the companies and universities.

This is why Ceapat-Imserso is considered a reference center. You are always ready to come and visit if you come to Madrid. Going further to Roxana's question, I would say there are three pillars that are extremely important for the development of accessible ICTs in the following years.

I show the three finger, this is an E. The three. The E are education, employment, entertainment. People comes to Ceapat-Imserso when they have some kind of accessibility need connected to ICT in education. I'm a Chilean with cerebral palsy. I'm a Chilean with attention disorder. I'm a Chilean with a child with visual or hearing need. I need a communicator. I need a way to connect with a computer. I need a 3D design product, like we do for free in the center for the last five years to be able to hold the ICT device that is not accessible by itself.

Second stage, employment. Many, many people want to keep on going, working or they want to work when they are after an accident or so on or because they have disability or they are elderly people who are getting to a smaller, let's say, little functional ability, and they want to keep on the working state. They ask -- they demand accessible ICT to be able to go ahead on this so critical daily life activities.

The third one is the entertainment. Many, many ministry are pushing for accessible ICT in entertainment. Television, video games, mobile phones. But these people also want to access to the information society, to the knowledge for Academic purposes. And they need this kind of accessibility.

Accessibility is a must-be condition for a more equal world. Because as we, everybody know, if you are out of the emerging ICT technologies you are not only out of the technology, you are out of the most important daily life activities that everybody need to survive.

The social participation is not only to communicate, it is to interact among each other. We must be able to understand to each other and also to align the way we think about equality.

To get to the end, I like to share with you this last, very last message.

Accessible ICTs is not only technical consideration, it is not only something to be added to enhance the mobile phone of my colleague. It is a must-be condition to claim for an equal world, according to the 17 sustainability goals. You go one by one of them, you discover accessibility ICT can contribute to reduce poorness, can contribute to enhance health, can contribute to education, can contribute to the gender barrier. We can go little by little through all of them.

It is important for all of us to get information and communicate about the accessible ICTs or to be able to enhance the world in an equal world. Ceapat-Imserso is a public body. We always go one step forward to raise our hand and our efforts with all the countries, not only our nation, but also international level to show how we are learning day-by-day about this possibility to enhance the society.

You can also go to Ceapat web page and there are dozens of accessible, free documents to know how we go forward in education, employment, and all the main domains that I shared before. Thanks a lot.
(Applause)
>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Muchas gracias, Miguel. Latin America. Latin America has made impressive steps forward to inclusiveness in all their cities and without any descrimination. Since 2014, ITU organizing an original event called Accessible Americas, ICT For All who addressed to gender, youth, indigenous people, person with disabilities, and older people.
This year, actually, in last November, in the end of the November will be held in Ecuador. So I invite you all to keep an eye on this event and to come if this is possible for you.
But in 2016, this event was held in Mexico. And Mexico, it is one of the role models in Latin America with regard implementation of ICT accessibility.
Senior Adolfo Cuevas Teja, as Commissioner of the Federal Telecommunication Institute of Mexico, since 2013 and considering your valuable experience on different position within the Government of Mexico in the last years, could you share with us the main achievements that the Mexico regulator has implemented to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities in Mexico?
And for those who are not familiar or knowledgeable in Spanish, please use your headphones. Thank you.
>> ADOLFO TEJA: Thank you very much, Roxana. I will speak in Spanish throughout this presentation. I would like to thank you for your kind attention.
In Mexico, the situation is the following. We had reformed the constitution into 2013. ICT technologies and communication were recognized as a fundamental human right. In order to be consistent with these rights, we couldn't allow ourselves, as a nation, to have any obstacle to addressing accessibility, therefore the law at the time was changed in order to include focusing on persons with disabilities and specific needs. This is relevant to my country and throughout the world.
In my country, about 7% of people, more than eight million people, indeed, have some type of disability. And of these, 50% elderly, above 60 years old. This is a problem, which as a country and as a world as a whole, we have to address the issue of an aging population.
Independent of other areas, I would like to highlight what I think is absolutely critical of why my country and the institute as a regulatory authority in my country is committed towards this goal. This is a part of the process of civilization such as equality for all.
This is an objective that has gone on for millennia. Every phase, sometimes through revolutions or peaceful means as well. We have been able to make progress and achieve equality.
The Sustainable Development Goals are a further step, commitment to

achieve equality to which we all aspire.

In areas of disability, in Mexico, we have concrete objectives which we're rolling out. The institute has addressed the constitution on the law, and the institute has taken concrete action in order to be -- ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. There are some guidelines which were established for persons with disabilities and those who are using broadcasting and ICTs.

This is where we have really made progress in the last few years. Firstly, allow me to share with you, for example, we have said that all web pages, all operators must be accessible for those with different disabilities. For example, people with visual impairment.

We also decreed that all operators had an obligation in terms of fixed and mobile services to have specific devices which are accessible for persons with disabilities. And what else did we do?

Well, we ensured that operators in their telephone call centers, there would be a person who would be able to explain these rights. Not only as an information session, but also in particular, to focus upon the needs of persons with disabilities and specific needs. We have also drafted and developed in alignment with industry different tutorials, because it is not only do we have to focus on information of persons with disabilities but also to ensure this information is really accessible and user friendly for those with disabilities. And this is also an obligation.

Furthermore, legislation has allowed us to put in place obligations to ensure that operators and in their public call centers have all the functionality that is required for persons with disabilities. So I'm referring to ramps, clear signage as well. And to have people there to help persons with disabilities. Also in the same vain, we ensure a percentage of public telephones also have -- accessible for persons with disabilities as well.

In this vain, we have built a vision to ensure full enjoyment of the rights of women and men affected by disabilities, and they shouldn't be hindered further and to allow us to reach the global goal of equality.

This is a pragmatic requirement, but also to allow the people to contribute even more to the country. But more importantly, that these -- this is an intrinsic requirement, something we have to do to ensure that we have a positive result and positive outcome for the complete inclusion of persons with disabilities and specific needs.

I think this is one of the more noble goals where we work together in the spirit of cooperation to achieve equality to ensure everyone enjoys full inclusion. Here, I would like to end upon that. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much, Mr. Adolfo Teja, for the important achievements they you have undertaken. I hope it can be rolled out in other countries as well.

Dr. Abeer Shakweer, is the advisor to the Egyptian Ministry of Communication And Information Technology For Social

Responsibilities and Services. She has been leading the implementation of similar projects using ICT to help persons with disabilities while engaging in private sector and Civil Society to jointly work towards achieving this fantastic goal.

Egypt is also a role model in promoting the inclusiveness for all the citizen, as the country has developed a national strategy for an inclusive community that places persons with disability at its core.

Dr. Abeer Shakweer, can you share with us the main pillars of the strategy and what was the key success factor in the achievements? Thank you.

>> ABEER SHAKWEER: Thank you, Roxana and everyone. It is always good to be at the WSIS forum to change views with colleagues.

To answer the question, I would like to say Egypt is paying unprecedented attention to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The communication and information technology was one of the first entities to develop a national strategy for empowerment of people with disabilities.

In 2012 and again in 2017, I would like to say we're working on few or several pillars and having the infrastructure at the core of the strategy.

Back in 2012, we were faced with the challenge that there is a lack of assistive technology that support the audible language. Not only Egypt, but all Arab countries. Of course, this was a big challenge for us, so we started by educating the ICT community on what accessibility is, what are assistive technology and we realize innovators and developers to work on the assistive technologies. After six years, we funded 300 projects in three years. We are not only funding projects but deploying technology at the entities. We work on the first unified sign language in Egypt. This is a challenge in many countries all over the world. And we deploy such dictionary at all the schools for the hearing impaired and we train the teachers on the use of the dictionary.

Also under the pillar of infrastructure, this year, we're launching our first national relay center, hopefully before the end of 2019. This is a big challenge for us. Another pillar is the accessibility of services. And at the top of the agenda in this pillar is the accessibility of education. And in order to work according to international standards, we work with the UNESCO and G3 ICT to develop Egypt policy for the ICT for accessibility education.

Based on the recommendations of the policy, we accessiblize the schools, using assistive technologies we develop and the schools for the visually impaired, for the deaf. And 50% of the schools for students with cognitive disabilities and we are working on making accessible inclusive schools based on readiness.

We trained more than 30,000 teachers on the use of assistive technologies. And we work with the Ministry of Interiors to issue the IRD and certificates and work on deploying telemedicine across the country to provide better healthcare not only for persons with

disabilities, of course, but to all unprivileged citizens. Under the same pillar, we are implementing an initiative now to make accessible all environmental importance, this was launched last July. We have an aggressive target to make accessible 30 portals by the coming July.

Another pillar is the capacity building. And we are providing a wide range of ICT training to persons with disabilities across Egypt. And we are focusing on remote and rural areas. We're glad to say that 50% of the graduates were employed in the private sector. Not in the Government. So it is not about a charity or good will. It is because they are qualified and productive.
Based on the success of this initiative, we launch the National Academy of ICT For Persons With Disabilities. We train 1,000 persons with disabilities on different programs. We are adding more training and diplomas with the authorization of entities. We are building the capacity of persons with disabilities but of all stakeholders like Government, police, teachers, parents to use assistive technologies to help persons with disabilities.

We're working on the international cooperation pillar and awareness raising pillar. We have many cooperation projects with different countries and entities to bring top- notch technologies to the Egyptians. As an example we're working with Japan to use technology for persons with print disabilities and working with U.K. to establish an innovation hub at our Academy for persons with disabilities. We have an annual conference from ICT to empower persons with disabilities. It trend last July for the second consecutive year. This was a remarkable event, it was attended by the excellency, President of Egypt. This give us a great push and showed the efficacies of the work we're doing. It showed how the Egyptian Government is looking at PWDs and puts them at the top of the agenda.

Last but not least the legislation framework. Of course such ingredients cannot be efficient without the legislative framework. We work to develop different policies, still a long way to go. We work -- we launch our ICT accessibility policy in cooperation request the ITU. We work with UNESCO and G3 ICT. We have an equal employment policy for the ICT sector. And for the first time, we manage to consider ICT accessibility and assistive technologies in the Egyptian world for persons with disabilities.
This is when it comes to legislation and framework.

I would like to comment actually on the stages we had while developing our strategy. The first strategy was concerned with infrastructure and with qualifying human resources, it was for conducting projects only on persons with disabilities because that is what we could do at that time. We moved into the exclusive society and now considering ICT in the mainstream projects of the ministry.

So when you asked me about the success factors, I -- what came to my mind is the participation of persons with disabilities, the engagement, this is the first key success factor. Engage in all stages, engage in the development of the strategy, engaged in the

selection of the assistive technologies to be funded. Engaged in the development of the policies. I think this is the number one key factor. Another key success factor is the political way. Thank you.
(Applause)
        >> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very, very much for this impressive, impressive investment that you share with all of us. And I can only say congratulation and I do hope that this will be replicated not only in the region but also in other countries that we wish to consider some of this success factors.
        Standards. Standards are essential to ensure global inclusiveness of person with disabilities. Due to the widespread use of ICT in public services, Governments should ensure that their public websites are accessible for all citizens, inclusive for person with disabilities.
        We know that Europe countries have already been accountable since last September for making their progress in this area. Mr. Shadi Abou-Zahra, within your work as an accessibility technology specialist with the Worldwide Web Consortium, in the web accessibility initiative, what would be your advice with regards to the doing of the web standards and how to implement them concretely?
        >> SHADI ABOU-ZAHRA: Thank you, Roxana. It is great to be here and a pleasure. Such a distinguished panel. I'm glad you mentioned related stakeholders. I think accessibility is a change in society and needs everybody. It can't be the Governments alone. It needs to be multiple stakeholders across the society in order to get that implemented. So in the case of web accessibility specifically, as part of the digital technologies we see the web evolving quickly, rapidly, converging with other technology, today you have virtual, immersive environments on the web.
        Most mobile applications are hybrid technology, they're using websites in the backend, getting the content and render it to the people. Television, broadcasting, radio, all of this. I could go on, telephony, all are converging. The web is a real, essential part. It is not just the website that you see publicly, but it is all what's behind that is part of the website, part of the web offering through the Internet that needs to be made accessible. I think as was highlighted, for example, by Inmaculada Porrero from the European commission, on building the ecosystem and getting the different parts, the different cog wheels working together so that the machinery can get in motion. And so there are really maybe two things in response to your question that I would recommend.
        One is to use the existing international standards. I think this is really, really important. Because when we have common standards, we can benefit from each other's work, each other's solution, existing expertise and different areas. I think this was a big driving force in Europe, for example.
But also there was a lot of your work between Europe and the U.S. on aligning and harmonizing. Disabilities don't stop at borders. In the digital age, we need to think beyond borders and think

globally. Using the existing standards saves a lot of time and effort that can be put in other areas.

We see a lot of developments in many countries in China or India or Brazil, to mention a few of some of the many countries happening, I think on this panel, this is an impressive examples from Egypt, for example, what is happening there, Mexico.

So, you know, building on existing standards can really accelerate, rather than to reinvent the wheel. And I'll admit, no international standard is perfect. No standard is perfect we can work on improving it. As technology evolves it is good to work rather than fragmentation. That is one part of the question.

The other answer is the majority of barriers we see that are continue to be put on the web are not because designers and developers are evil people. It is lack of awareness, it is lack of training and understanding. It is having never interacted -- Roxana you put it nicely in the beginning, trying to describe, make the word "accessibility" more tangible, more related. Somebody with a visual disability, somebody with a hearing disability, somebody with a mental, cognitive learning disability. Mental health disorders, all of these aspects are part of accessibility. So when we make it tangible, when we teach the designers and the developers and the managers who are responsible for this ultimately throughout their educational process to embed accessibility in the programs in the program, the awareness, capacity and skills. It is not only a technical solution. That applies to high-tech, as well as low tech. If you don't know what the ramp is for and how to build it, you will build the ramp wrong. Even something relatively simple. It is the same in digital accessibility.

If you are not aware of the use cases, the people behind it, then you are not able to address it effectively.

In that context, one of the most important aspects is the involvement of people with disabilities. Very how often, we speak about people with disabilities without involving them. Involving them in the policymaking, involving them in the standardization process. Involving them in the educational process. All of these things need the involvement of people with disabilities themselves to represent themselves. Thank you.
(Applause)

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you, SHADI for bringing the technical issue to understanding of each of us. And with this in mind, we arrive to our last but not least speaker. Mr. Ricardo Garcia. So ICT accessibility is, without any doubt, the global goal to ensure inclusiveness in communication. As digital accessibility and disability inclusion professional with over 15 years of international experience in Europe, U.S., Latin America and Middle East, could you conclude with some key recommendation towards the successful implementation of ICT accessibility that can serve to all of us?

>> RICARDO GARCIA: Thank you, Roxana. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everybody. I want to thank the ITU for giving me the

opportunity of being here and sharing the panel with my fellow colleagues here.

Yeah, there's a number of recommendations that have been pretty much already covered by the panelists, so not much more for me to say, but I will touch on a few points that I think are worth stressing, underscoring. One of the things that I've seen -- this is something that I'm sure you all have seen, is that when we're talking about digital accessibility in this case, depending on the audience, we get sometimes people don't know what we're talking about or being discussed.

This is as Shadi mentions is due to general lack of knowledge. This is not part of the conversation. We're trying to make it part of the conversation, that's why we're here, right? And this is why we want to issue a number of recommendations, to make this more visible. What we want to do eventually is normalize accessibility, to normalize disability as something that, of course, everybody will be affected by at some stage. Throughout our lives. So we're all used to -- I say we're all used to using a computer, laptop, mobile phone. All kinds of devices, digital devices or digital technologies, right? At some point, we're all going to be faced with impairments, at some point in our life. So we better make sure that they're all made accessible as soon as possible.

"Accessible" meaning we will need to use certain technologies, called assistive technologies to be able to use digital content. What we call digital content. Otherwise, we may not be able to do that. What I see is in order to do that, we need to involve all stakeholders. My colleagues have already mentioned most of them. We can talk about of course, private sector companies, Academia, of course, Civil Society, media, playing a huge role in normalizing the presence. I mean, people with disability, people with impairments whichever they are. It doesn't matter and accessibility, making this the norm, right? As it has happened with other things that we have seen. You know, for example, environmental awareness, I see it as something similar. In order to do this, we can work on, you know -- can't work on a piecemeal approach, we will resolve this, we will patch that. No, we need to have a pretty holistic approach and make use as Shadi mentioned, standards when using digital interfaces, and whatever is developed by the public with a screen on some device, whether it is digital interface, tellers, automated tellers, kiosks, laptops, everything, mobile phone of course. That means using universal design principles.

Of course, the use of standards is important because it is critical. That is something that the people that actually design and develop things can stick to, to make sure that they're doing the right thing and they're going to be meeting the minimums that make it possible for a lot of people to use that. Right? In the same way as there is standards being applied to built environment, right now, that is called the building code. We're going to be -- we should be doing exactly the same thing when building digital content, digital solutions, applications, everything. Sorry, I'm dropping

my paper all the time here.

And so that would be recommendation number one. Involving all stakeholders in different ways, Inma mentioned the Government has a role in doing public procurement. Everything Government does at different Government levels, whether it is central Government, regional Government, local, municipalities, different agencies, they're purchasing. I mean, they don't develop things internally, in general, when we talk about websites, portals, so forth. They outsource that, purchase that, right? They want to make sure whatever they purchase is done following the standards. Right item that has to be included in the terms of reference of all public tenders, of all requests for proposals. That is something that is absolutely critical. Of course, we want to include private sector. Because private sector, eventually, it is who is doing things, right? In general, they're developing all the portals, all the technologies are being developed by companies, right? So we want to raise awareness among them, big time. But also a big component here that is already been mentioned, that is training. We need to raise awareness and train. And in the sense of the ITU is doing a great job at promoting this kind of training across the board through many countries, because this is something we want to scale, right? At different levels. At different levels. Of course, Academia. Academia is absolutely critical. In talking about education, primary education, secondary, university. Right?

We want to make sure that all of the different levels of education in a given country, do the right thing, adopt technology that have accessible digital technologies so everybody can benefit from them. Of course, Civil Society, Civil Society has to play, is going to play a great role here, really huge role, because eventually, that is who will benefit from all of this. Right? Who will be using all of this, right? As associations, people with disabilities should have a very strong say here.

Media, media in terms of making all of this visible, making it normal should be playing a very critical role here. Miguel angel mentioned the three Es. The education, employment and entertainment.
That is what we all do in our lives. I would add another E, the entrepreneurship. The whole economic model is shifting from you know, life-long job, you know you start working for a corporation, you then retire there. Well, that's probably unfortunately or fortunately, I don't know, that will not be the case, you know in many cases right. For many of us, for future generations, entrepreneurship is becoming huge, is being promoted in all countries, right? We want to make sure entrepreneurship is also inclusive, right? And everything is digital in entrepreneurship. Everything is going digital, right? That is definitely another recommendation, promoting awareness among incubators, accelerators, so forth. That means mainstreaming ICT accessibility across everything that we do, right? Of course, we need a plan.

Every country needs a plan. Every country will need a

strategy, policy and implementation of the policies through the laws, through the regulations, enforcement mechanisms and using the standards, as a main lever to actually make things happen. Of course, this will not happen overnight, but it will happen throughout. A number of years as we have seen here, we have seen here very successful cases. And again, stress that we need to -- people with disabilities must be included in this whole process. Again, talking about Civil Society.

So that's pretty much what I would like to bring to the table. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much, Ricardo. Actually, thank you, you all, for making all efforts to being very succinct in every single presentation. In order to leave some space for interactive discussion with the audience. So we still have five to eight minutes left. So the floor is yours. Okay. Could you please introduce yourself?

>> QUESTION: I'm angel Alec. My question is, maybe for the last speaker from your list. Who is the entity in each Government or each state which is responsible to put or to develop the policy strategy or relation for the disabilities or disables. Because you know, maybe ICT it is part which belong to the telecommunication sectors. Or ICT sectors in the country, but there is a lot of maybe consent or related entities. So how they cooperate, how they can cooperate between each other to create the strategy. Who is the entity that should be the main responsible for this issue. Thank you.

>> RICARDO GARCIA: Thank you for the question. There should be one entity that should take the lead in doing this. As you said, it could be different ministries leading the whole process. Maybe ICT in others. Others, I have seen Ministry of Health, for whatever reason, the Ministry of Building, in pursue they're driving the accessibility policy. From a physical environment standpoint they made that like an umbrella under which ICT accessibility also goes. So that is something for our Government to decide. Now, they need to be given the power, you know, and they also, the responsibility and the account ability for actually driving this whole process. Okay? And that is why you need a strong policy in place and that policy needs to be articulated or implemented through laws and bylaws and enforcement mechanisms. This is something to enforce, new laws are absolutely critical if we want to see results, if we want to see things happening. Thank you.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Another question. We have here first the gentleman in the first row and then that gentleman there.

>> QUESTION: Good afternoon everyone, I'm a deaf person, the national CEO of deaf people in Colombia. It is a reflect or conclusion for everyone here. I am here, I have been here for Monday, Tuesday, and today seeing the only conference and everyone is talking about the SDGs and to leave no one behind. But sometimes the (indiscernible) are talking about that entities, talking about accessibility, talking about inclusion. Now you are talking aboutx

inclusion, which is very good. But the more important thing is think about the people with disabilities, but the people with disabilities are not the same. Everybody is not the same in the group of people with disabilities. We need you to see us in the dual approach. For example, the deaf people, we need to see us as a language community. A worldwide language community. In the world, we have more than 100 sign languages. So Government, the other Governments have still no recognition for sign languages. I have been in another talk when they talk about the emergencies or situations of disasters. And they talk about accessibility for people with disabilities. And we want to talk about this.

Last Monday, the Nepal foundation invited me to have a talk about the 25 telecommunication relay services that exist now in the world. But only three of this telecommunication relay services has founded -- has been founded by the Government. The other telecommunication relay services are private. We think the Colombia Government with the ministers of the ICT, that is founding the telecommunication regulation center in Colombia. The call center.

Now, every month, we are relaying 40,000 calls for free for the deaf people. Why? Because interpreters are not enough for the needs of the deaf people in Colombia. And other countries don't have the recommendations of sign languages.

But I want to talk about also for the Resolution 70 of the ITU. In this Resolution, ITU recommends for the Member States to create their own tool communication relay services. It seems that the Governments do not pay attention to this Resolution. I encourage you to create your own telecommunication relay services. I do have the application -- the mobile application of (indiscernible) of the telecommunication relay service and I can use it here but I'm not using it right now because I need a sign language that also know English.

But in conclusion I invite you to think about in the people with disabilities not only in the disability approach, but in the approach of communication. And the approach of access and the approach of languages.

I hope for every country to install and have the ultimate telecommunication relay services. Thank you so much.
(Applause)

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Thank you very much for the pertinent remarks. Definitely they represent food for thought for each of us. And also for the policymakers that are with us in the audience.

With this, our last question, please.

>> QUESTION: Yes, good morning. I'm Mr. D, I'm from Senegal, back at the college there. I would like to ask a question about where we are in terms of standardization. We talked a lot about it. Have we started it? How long are we? When will it be applied? Standardization is the normal index on handicaps, like I have heard, we can have a great list of handicaps and need to define them, characterize them, see how to help them with the ICTs. That's quite a lot of work already. That's one thing.

Now, how can we talk about them? How can we start working with these? What sort of organization will we need so that all the stakeholders and the populations that are concerned can be involved? Because these technologies should be aimed at a target audience, the population that we're talking about, this is very important. It's so important that we need to start now and see what sort of Resolutions or actions that we can undertake now or very soon, anyway, so that between now and four or five years' time that we will be able to deal with certain number of handicaps. See how many handicaps, whether visual, cognitive, auditory, physical, sensory, et cetera, can be dealt with. So the idea is to make an appeal and if necessary put in place a trust fund to help people with Haney cap so the ITU and United Nations as a whole can accelerate this process so we can move towards results. We need to put in place something that will promote synergy, promote the creation of applications, so on, so forth. It is really high time we start because if we don't do this now, in a few year's times we would not have made much progress.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: We would like to thank you for the comment. Once again, as we did with the previous speaker, this I think will be incentives for everyone. Let us not forget that the power is in your hands within the framework of the United Nations. Our work is focused on what countries and the Member States decide to do. What they think is important to implement the global levels. I would invite you to be a leader in these actions and to promote your ideas so that they will be implemented.

And to conclude our session (chuckling) -- okay. So please?

>> QUESTION: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ben Clerras. I have a question in regards to the situations like we're in right now. Around the world, presentations, conferences and events are a central part of knowledge sharing in the information society. Do you think the current standards or law are good enough to both require and motivate presenters and organizers to properly accommodate and include everyone?

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: Anyone want to take this one?

>> Yeah, I would like to respond to the earlier question from Senegal, which I think also addresses part of the second question. So very briefly. Yes, if I understood the question correctly, yes, there are many standards available and ready for use and that are being implemented. For different situations, broadcasting, audio visual, there are standards from ITU, ISO, ITF, from different bodies issue there are standards. At WTC, the standards are royalty-free available. Anybody can use them. They're free of cost. We welcome translations we have an authorized translation procedure to allow them to be recognized translations. So we would really love to work. We have already had that in different countries, different organizations in order to be able to have them adopted.

The web content accessibility guidelines, the lead standard for web accessibility is also adopted as ISO40500. We can talk offline about the use of standardization. We use a universal design approach, and address different disabilities collectively. It is

an open process where in the development of the standards we have processed thousands of comments, literally that came from all around the world. We would welcome also from other perspectives as we evolve, new versions of the standard.

The web content accessibility guidelines has also been adopted in the European standard, EN301549. I know lots of numbers in standardization. But this is a very important standards that addresses ICT overall, not only web. Web is only part of that. And that uses the web content guidelines, addresses software, hardware, documents that are not on the web. You know, whole area of things, so that is a really useful standard that I think can also be looked at. Miguel, did you want to add to that.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: I'm sorry. --

>> Miguel angel: You ask about the presentations and knowing about the presentations, if I prepared a presentation, I could take into being, visual, hearing accessibility. But if I forget about cognitive accessibility, it is everything is less. If I just start through cognitive accessibility, and physical and audio visual accessibility of my presentation will be better.

Standards help us to know how to do the things, but we must do them by themselves and validated with the other people. Thank you.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: I would like to add, complementing the two previous answers in order to achieve accessibility, standards are necessary. They're a piece in the process. They contain the technical details, but to ensure they're applied, they need to be used in legislation. Legislation policies are necessary that ensure that a particular standard is used in order to achieve accessibility. Thank you.

>> ROXANA WIDMER-ILIESCU: With this in mind, instead of saying good-bye to all of you, I would invite each of the speakers just to conclude with one message that you would like to convey to the audience in one phrase, very shortly.

>> Sustainability, and accessibility must be accessible.

>> Yeah, very good point, to add to that, I think I would add maybe awareness, raising, awareness raising, awareness raising. I think this is a fundamental, without learning about each other's needs, and thinking about an inclusive approach, I think this is where the mistakes happen.

>> Just to end, the endeavors of a whole nation, in order to have the dignity for all, identity for all is to ensure equality that won't lead to minorities, inequality and disadvantages. We need to have an ethical goal and to have a social and economic goal as well. There has to be an ethical commitment for all. Thank you.

>> Well, I'm going to say some challenging words. There is no such thing as an inclusive society -- as an inclusive information society without accessibility. Accessibility is about flexibility, personalization, adaptation. It is about satisfying the needs, preferences, and choices of individuals. When you do that you have cohesion, you have a society that is inclusive for all and pulse for

persons with disabilities.

>> There is a space, there is a global space -- I'm here so I have to talk about the United Nations. This is a space where all stakeholders can keep meeting, keep raising awareness, and the social groups that are here. They're not minorities, they're big groups. If you sum them up, they're the majority of the world. We have to think in terms of economic, social, environmental, political, cultural terms where the participation of all the groups is key. Otherwise, what are we talking about?

As far as presenters, motivating people working in the media world. Yes, there isn't too much. Even there, if this information is provided, I suppose like the gentlemen that posed the question earlier on, they also as presenters will find the motivation to use through various technological devices such as digital TV, et cetera, et cetera, reasons to keep talking about the topics, because you will be addressing the majority of the world.

>> I'd like to say that inclusive societies are not only benefitting the target groups, it is empowering the whole community, empowering the whole society, it is essential for economic and social development.

>> Yeah, I would say normalize by involving people with disabilities and consulting with them in all these processes at a national level that have to do with creating the structures, infrastructure for ICT accessibility adoption of policy and strategy under the principle of nothing about us, without us.

>> Thank you. I would like to emphasize that ITU is always available and accessible to assist countries to build their national strategies, policies, program for the accessibility. Thank you.

>> And I would also like to add shortly that everyone's work in ICT accessibility can make a difference. But only by working together we can make a lasting change in our societies to make them inclusive. So I invite you all to join us. Thank you.
(Applause)
(Presentation concluded)

<center>***</center>