***ICTs for Disability-Inclusive Development Efforts***

*Side event at the 6th session of the COSP to the CRPD*

17 July 2013, 16:45 - 18:00, Conference Room E*,* North Lawn Building

The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMDD) provides a historic opportunity to bring global attention to the exclusion of women and men with disabilities from mainstream activities resulting in poverty, illiteracy, inequality, unemployment, and social welfare realities. Precisely at a moment when the international community is discussing the issues that will be reflected in the new framework development, this platform presents an excellent occasion for all stakeholders to work together towards the achievement of a common goal of the United Nations: achieving sustainable development and collectively building inclusive knowledge societies in which persons with disabilities are both agents, beneficiaries and creators.

In support of this historic event, and to contribute to a successful outcome of the meeting, the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Microsoft, the Telecentre.org Foundation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)have launched a global consultation to capture the recommendations from all stakeholders on the critical contribution of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), such as websites, mobile, radio and TV, as well as the work of other information and memory institutions accessing information and knowledge which is so required to achieve the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.

 ***Global Consultation on ICTs, Disability and Development***

The consultation, which was conducted from 20 May 2013 to 17 June 2013, has gathered over 150 expert inputs from relevant organizations and key individuals, representing various categories of stakeholders (including governments, academic institutions, organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, and private sector) and stemming from over 55 countries, regional and international organizations.

The preliminary results of the ICT consultation in support of the HLMDD have confirmed that, with ICTs increasingly integrated into every aspect of the modern world, these technologies have become a positive force of transformation and a crucial element of any institutional framework for inclusive development. ICTs are already providing access to key public services such as health, education, information and government services, with widespread implications for social progress and economic growth aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting inclusive societies and sustainable development. Unfortunately, while ICTs have the potential to further the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the international community, barriers such as cost of assistive technology, ICT inaccessibility, ineffective policy-making, ineffective policy implementation and lack of access to ICTs still inhibit full utilization of ICTs for disability-inclusive development.

Considering the way forward in addressing these challenges, the consultation findings highlight that certain steps must be taken to ensure a disability-inclusive development framework. These include i) promoting collaboration between governments and the private sector, cooperating to expand access to affordable ICTs, ii) promoting investment in research and development activities aimed at developing the assistive technologies for persons with disabilities, iii) mainstreaming the use of accessible ICTs to enable access to basic public services, and iv) supporting the creation of relevant content and services for persons with disabilities.

***Side Event Presentation of Results and Recommendations***

The side event will highlight the findings of the consultation while speakers from stakeholder organizations will be sharing their views and concrete recommendations to be brought to the attention of the HLMDD Chair. After the completion of this stage, the floor will be opened for questions from the audience where interactive discussion will be encouraged.

The event will feature the following issues and speakers:

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| *Opening Remarks by:* **Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes**, Chairperson of the Committee of the CRPD*Speakers (in alphabetical order):** ***Suzanne Bilello****, Senior Public Information and Liaison Officer, UNESCO*
* ***Penny Hartin****, CEO, World Blind Union (on behalf of the International Disability Alliance)*
* ***Axel Leblois****, President and Executive Director, G3ICT (Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs)*
* ***John S. Lee,*** *Technical Advisor of Standards and Licensing, BlackBerry; Rapporteur for Question 26 (Accessibility) of Study Group 16, International Telecommunication Union*
* ***Maria Liliana Mor****, Director of Economic Opportunities Initiatives, The Trust for the Americas OAS (on behalf of Telecentre.org Foundation)*
* ***James Thurston****, Director of International Accessibility Policy,* *Microsoft Trustworthy Computing Group*
* ***Ruth Warick****, President, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (on behalf of the International Disability Alliance)*

*Moderator:* **Gary Fowlie**, Head, International Telecommunication Union Liaison Office to the United Nations*Rapporteur*: ***John S. Lee,***Technical Advisor of Standards and Licensing, BlackBerry; Rapporteur for Question 26 (Accessibility) of Study Group 16, International Telecommunication Union*Open debate* with attendees at the event |

*For further information about the event or about the
Global Consultation on ICTs, Disability and Development,
please contact* *accessibility@itu.int*