

## **Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) Annual report - 2021**

DCAD promotes participation for persons with disability in Internet governance and in the IGF. According to WHO, over one billion people have a disability globally. DCAD plays a key and ongoing role in the IGF by advising on and collaborating with the IGF Secretariat to ensure that both onsite and online facilities are accessible.

Besides our IGF Annual session during the year DCAD also was actively involved in all the DC Coordinated sessions, activities, and reports. Our appointed Liaison attended the calls and participated in the reports

Additionally, DCAD Members helped the IGF Secretariat in providing feedback to the developer of the new IGF website to ensure that it followed the standards and guidelines specified by the World Wide Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), the IGF reporting mechanisms and also how to make the IGF more accessible to people with disabilities both in the hybrid, virtual and the IGF schedule. DCAD also was active in the NRI and DC network to ensure that other NRIs are made friendly and accessible for people with disabilities.

Lastly, we worked with many of the NRIs to ensure accessibility was taken into account. In 2020/21 we launched a survey asking NRIs to report on the accessibility of their events

### **DCAD IGF Session**

#### **DCAD Hosted a Session at the IGF 2021 Conference on the theme “Challenges & Opportunities for People with Disabilities in a Post Covid World**

Speakers were:

Muhammad Shabbir Awan, ISOC Board Member, Asia Pacific,

Judy Okite, Africa,

Gerry Ellis, WEOG,

Lidia Best, Chair of National Association of Deafened People, WEOG,

Gunela Astbrink, IGF MAG Member and ISOC Accessibility SIG VP

Moderators were

Onsite: Judith Hellerstein and Remote: Gunela Astbrink

#### **Key Takeaways were:**

- The need for meaningful involvement of person with disabilities at all levels of IT organisations
- The need for PWD to be involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of IT

projects in order to assure accessibility.

- The need for accessibility measures to be developed and implemented in countries outside of the Global North and in non English-speaking cultures
- The need for digital accessibility to be recognised as a fundamental right and a necessity, regardless of the experience of individuals who may or may not be directly impacted
- Speakers and participants recognised that existing digital accessibility barriers have been exacerbated by the increased reliance on online technologies during and post Covid.

#### **Calls to Action that came out of the session:**

- Work with IGF and other stakeholders, Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Forums and Policy Networks on web and content accessibility as well as accessibility issues with PowerPoint, documents and other tools
- The national coordinators to add in their advertisement for their National/ Regional/ Youth events the accessibility features that they plan to have in place and secondly, to add this feature to their IGF reports.
- Ensure that all sites and documents follow the W3C WCAG and web authoring tools guidelines.
- Call for the IGF and related entities to recognise and abide by the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy as recommended in its 2021 report. This includes:
  - Embedding disability inclusion in strategic plans and establishing institutional ownership.
  - Building the knowledge and capacities of staff on disability inclusion.
  - Improving physical and digital accessibility.
  - Supporting meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

#### **Based on the session, the DCAD called for the IGF Secretariat to:**

- Run webinars for the IGF community when writing and uploading content to the IGF website. This will help build awareness and make sure that content is as accessible as possible.
- Develop and apply an 'accessibility filter' policy when planning any new online tools and updating websites.
- Contract companies with documented experience in accessibility to run webinars, and to test tools and content with staff with disabilities. This requirement should be part of any tender documentation.

### **DCAD IGF Participation Grants**

With the kind support of Google, DCAD was again able to offer participation grants for persons with disability to IGF in 2021. Because of travel and border restrictions as well as the uncertainty of new Covid outbreaks, grants were not offered for travel to the IGF meeting in Poland.

The DCAD Selection Committee concentrated on supporting participants' broadband

connections and a computer hub.

The expended funds were just over US\$3000.

Participants granted funding were from:

- Uganda
- Sri Lanka
- Kenya (2)
- Ghana
- Haiti

The computer Hub was in Haiti and had planned to include country-specific workshops on accessibility for persons with disability as well as a large number of participants being able to connect to the IGF sessions. The Hub ended up watching programs at different times because of the time zones.

One of the grantees made an intervention in the IGF main session.

DCAD appreciates the administration support of the Accessibility SIG, a Project of ISOC New York for administering the fund and acting as the secretariat for DCAD

## DCAD report on NRI's and Accessibility for Persons with Disability 2021

The year 2021 saw an increase of both online and hybrid format Internet governance forum meetings globally, Below is a list of the National and Regional IGF that had uploaded reports at the IGF Portal for the year 2021

Source : <https://www.intgovforum.org/en>

<b>IGF INITIATIVES</b>			
<i>Africa</i>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Accessibility for Persons with disability(Sign language interpretation/part of discussion etc)</b>
Benin	Prospects for Benin's Digital Economy 2021-2030	Hybrid	
Gambia	Digital Inclusion and Access for Resilient Gambia	Physical	
Kenya	Internet United	Virtual	- Sign Language Interpretation available
Mauritania	Eliminating Barriers in Internet Governance Processes	Physical	
Mozambique	Por uma Internet Acessível e Inclusiva” Google translate - (For an Accessible and Inclusive Internet)	Hybrid	
Nigeria	Internet that Works for all	Virtual	
Togo	5G, IoT, Cryptomonnaie et Blockchain, (Google Translate; 5G, IoT,	Virtual	

	Cryptocurrency and Blockchain)		
<b><i>Asia Pacific</i></b>			
Korea	New Beginnings: Governance of Equality, Fairness, and Participation	Virtual	
<b><i>Eastern European Regional group:</i></b>			
Estonia: (Talks about Internet day, is this IGF?)	Tomorrows weather on the Internet	Virtual	
Russia		Hybrid	
Ukraine		Virtual	
<b><i>Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group (GRULAC):</i></b>			
Trinidad and Tobago	Digitalization: The New Norm	Virtual	
<b>2.</b>			
<b>3. <i>Western European and Others Regional Group (WEOG):</i></b>			
Italy		Hybrid	
Spain		Hybrid	
IGF-USA		Virtual	Real time Human captioning was available for the entire event and Sign language interpretation- was available upon request. However, there were no requests. Website, forms and other accessibility issues were taken into account
<b><i>Regional Initiatives</i></b>			
African IGF		Virtual	No report available

APrIGF		Hybrid	Sign language interpretation for some sessions. Captioning. Part of discussion.
Arab IGF		Virtual	No report available
Northern Africa region	Digital development: priorities and opportunities in the North African region	Hybrid	
Pacific Region		Hybrid	Captioning. And some sign language Part of discussion.
<b><i>Youth IGF</i></b>			
Ukraine		Virtual	
Vietnam		Hybrid	

**Point of action:**

The discussion around accessibility, inclusion etc were focused more on infrastructural Internet access and inclusion of women, girls and older persons.

There is a need to highlight the difference between accessibility for persons with disability which would fall under human rights and access to the Internet which would fall under Internet Infrastructure.

**DCAD website and mailing list**

DCAD’s website and mailing list is ably managed by Joly MacFie, the Administrator of the Internet Society’s Accessibility Special Interest Group. The website gives DCAD the flexibility to host the NRI survey and the DCAD Fellowship application form, for example. Joly MacFie also maintains the membership list that is made available on the website. Further information is at: <https://igf-dcad.org>