Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)
Annual report - 2024

DCAD works to (a) promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the IGF and other Internet governance processes, and (b) to ensure that ICT accessibility is included in the key debates around Internet governance and digital policy to build a future where all sectors of the global community have equal access to the information society. The coalition plays a key and ongoing role in the IGF by advising and collaborating with the IGF Secretariat and various national and regional IGF initiatives to ensure that their processes and meetings, both onsite and virtual, are accessible.

This year DCAD was very active contributing with the IGF. Our activities fall into ten main areas:

- Finalizing the new Governance documents and a Code of Conduct and other related Activities.
- Revising the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines
- Participating in the monthly NRI Calls and reporting on accessibility issues.
- Participating in the monthly Policy Network on Meaningful Access as DCAD is now part of the Organizing group
- Work with the IGF Secretariat on Accessibility issues relating to the website, the Venue and other accessibility issues.
- Active participation in the monthly Dynamic Coalitions Coordinating Group Calls and parallel work on organizing and participating in DCCG presentations and Main Sessions several times a year.
- Active Participation and presentations during MAG Consultation Sessions
- Presentations of DCAD at EURODIG and other IGF Sessions
- Joint Presentation with the DC on Open Educational Resources
- DCAD Travel Fellowship Program to the IGF

DCAD Work Projects-Governance and Accessibility Guidelines

In 2023, DCAD had developed a new Governance document in a working group headed by Lidia Best, Andrea Saks, and Deirdre Williams. In 2024, these Governance documents were finalized and uploaded to the DCAD website. As was discussed in the 2023 Annual Report, Dr. Shabbir and Judith Hellerstein had investigated several different governance framework and spoke to several other DCs about their current framework. Dr. Shabbir and Judith presented their work to DCAD members, and a Governance framework and model of Governance was selected.

In 2023, DCAD had appointed two Coordinators to help manage and Coordinate the work of the DCAD. The two Coordinators were Dr. Muhammad Shabbir and Judith Hellerstein. They continued their work in 2024, and this year's main project was a complete revision of the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines. Much of the work in revising these guidelines was done by our steering committee of dedicated volunteers composed of Judith Hellerstein, Dr. Muhammad Shabbir, Maureen Aguena, and Nicodemus Nyakundi along with additional contributions by

Peter Crosbie, Lidia Best, and Andrea Saks. The revised guidelines were then sent to the DCAD list and comments were received by other members. The Guidelines were then finalized prior to the start of the 2024 IGF. The Guidelines were uploaded to the DCAD website and also sent to the IGF Secretariat and the IGF Leadership team. DCAD then printed about 15 copies of the Guidelines in English Braille, and these were distributed at the IGF to groups who had requested them. The Coordinators then created a one page summary of the guidelines with an appropriate QR code so that these could be made available at the Dynamic Coalitions Booth at the IGF. The DCAD team plans to update the guidelines this year and also has offers to translate them into multiple languages, namely, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Italian, French, and Russian. We will publish a revised guide to accessibility issues in January.

DCAD collaboration with the NRIs, EURODIG, and with the IGF PNMA

In 2024, the Coordinators continued assisting the IGF Secretariat on accessibility improvements to the IGF Website and also we sent out our annual accessibility guide and tips to the Secretariat. DCAD also was active in the NRI and DC network to ensure that other NRIs are made friendly and accessible for people with disabilities. We worked with many of the NRIs to ensure accessibility was taken into account.

DCAD also was included this year as one of the members of the Multisector advisory body for the Policy Network on Meaningful Access. Dr. Muhammad Shabbir submitted a case study on Digital Financial Inclusion in Pakistan for their repository of best practices. Judith Hellerstein helped organized the main session and was the Online Moderator for this session.

Other work this year for DCAD relates to our accessibility work connected to the MAG meeting, WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, IGF Leadership Comments, and other related comments that the Secretariat was hosting. DCAD submitted extensive comments to all these groups and these comments can be found on the IGF website. DCAD also presented on the MAG Consultations on Digital Inclusion held this past year.

DCAD was invited to create a session at the EURODIG meeting this past June and had a lively and well attended session. The session focused on the impact of the European Accessibility Act which took effect in April 2019. The Act's goals are to improve the trade between members of the EU for accessible products and services, by removing country-specific rules. This law was built to complement the EU's Web Accessibility Directive of 2016 and includes a wide range of systems including personal devices such as computers, smartphones, e-books, and TVs, as well as public services like television broadcasts, ATMs, ticketing machines, public transport services, banking services and e-commerce sites that must be accessible to persons of disabilities. This session focused on how well several European organizations are living up to these goals and making the EU as accessible as possible. The session was moderated by Dr. Mohammed Shabbir, the Coordinator of DCAD.

DCAD involvement with the DC Coordinating Group

DCAD Coordinators also were very active participants on the monthly DCCG calls and helped organize and participated in several organized sessions organized by DCCG members. Several

of the DCCG members hosted several presentations in an effort to raise the profile of Dynamic Coalitions in the IGF and DCAD helped organize and participated in these sessions. The Coordinators also participated and contributed to the surveys created to help the team provided the primary data necessary to write the reports and/or comments.

The DCCG meets on a monthly basis and this year help revise and/or draft some new governance documents, which included a new charter, organized separate sessions at the MAG Meetings and also organized the Main session of the IGF. The DCCG Organizers also drafted joint comments to the IGF in response to the Global Digital Compact, IGF MAG Consultations, the DCCG Report, and other reports that the DCCG issued. In addition to a joint report, the DCAD also published its own comments to these reports. DCAD worked with the DCCG on its presentation to the MAG meeting in the June/July time frame.

The DCCG decided to have a booth within the IGF village at this year's IGF and DCAD members and the DCAD fellows help staff the booth and also promoted DCAD and our work to other participants who came by.

DC IGF Main Session

DCAD was also on the organizing team to plan the DC main session at the IGF and DCAD. This year the Main session was organized around the Global Digital Compact. Contributing to the GDC: The IGF's Community of Dynamic Coalitions' Support for Sustainable Digital Development: Improving Digital Governance for the Internet We Want. The session had divided the Dynamic Coalitions into five buckets corresponding to the five objectives of the GDC, which are:

- Bridging Digital Divides and Accelerating Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals
- Expanding Digital Economy Inclusion and Benefits for All
- Fostering a Safe, Secure, and Inclusive Digital Space that Upholds Human Rights
- Advancing Responsible, Equitable, and Interoperable Data Governance
- Enhancing Global AI Governance for Humanity's Benefit

This session built on last year's Dynamic Coalition main session "The Internet We Want - Human Rights in the digital space to accelerate the SDGs" as a catalyst for debate around sustainable digital development. The session linked DC Contributions to the Internet We Want with GDC Commitments, Map DC Expertise in Relation to the GDC: Identified and documented the specific expertise within DCs that aligns with the GDC's objectives; explored how DCs can contribute to the implementation and ongoing follow-up of the Compact's commitments, and provided recommendations on how to translate these outcomes into greater integration into 2025 and beyond IGF processes.. Judith Hellerstein organized and coordinated the section on Expanding Digital Economy and Digital Inclusion for All which contained four DCs, DCAD, DC on Financial Inclusion, DC on Open Educational Resources, DC on the DC on the Environment. Dr. Shabbir was elected by the group to present all four DCs common points on this Digital Inclusion Category in the main session. Judith Hellerstein was one of the Online
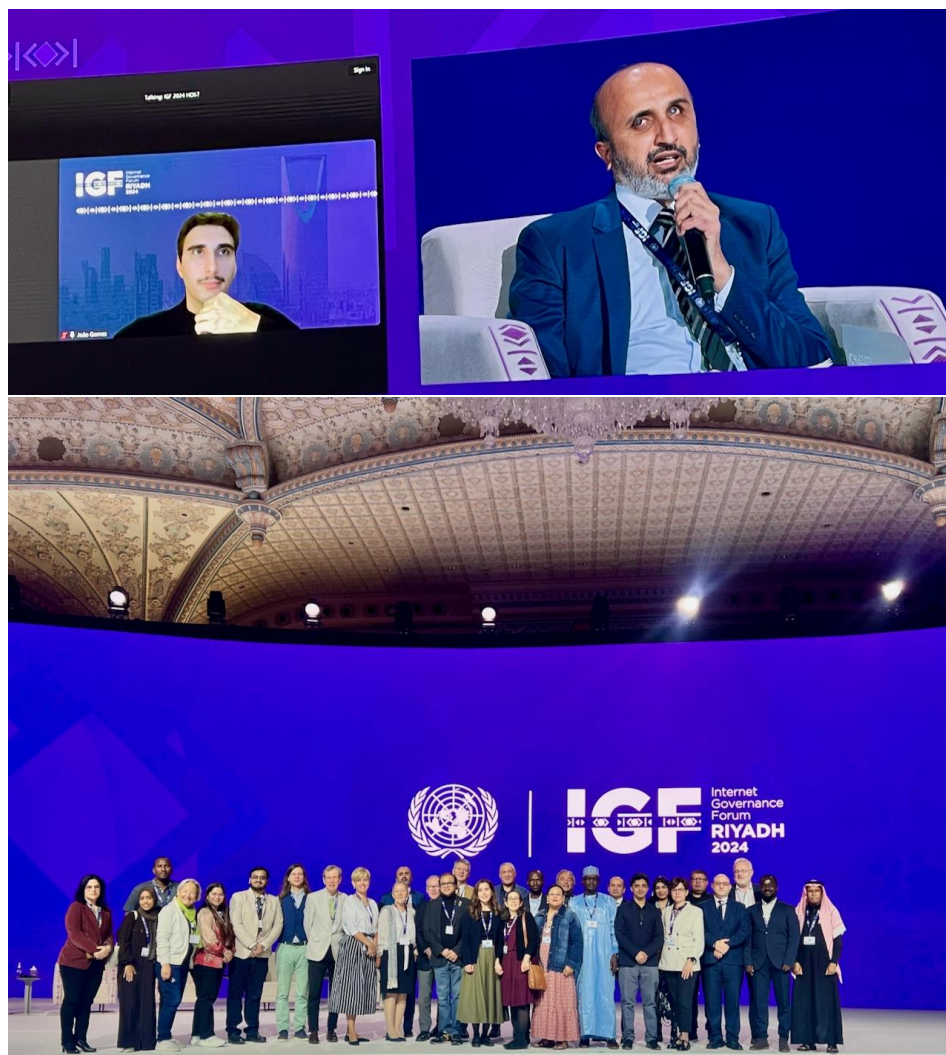
Moderators and organizers for this session.

DCAD's advocacy on accessibility issues was one of the main reasons why all main sessions and plenaries had International Sign Language interpreters. In 2023 none of the Main sessions had sign language interpreters assigned as these Interpreters were only arranged for the ceremonial and opening/closing sessions at the IGF

DCAD also contributed to the DCCG Paper on how Dynamic Coalitions can strengthen the IGF, which included a focus on accessibility and ensuring that persons with disability are included? This paper was submitted as an input to the IGF.

DCAD-OER IGF Session

This year, DCAD partnered with the DC on Open Educational Resources to put on our DC session. This session explored the intersection of Open Educational Resources (OER) and emerging technologies and their impact on persons with disabilities in promoting inclusive access to knowledge. We discussed how OER, Artificial Intelligence, and other emerging technologies can break down barriers and promote inclusivity. We examined the importance of incorporating inclusive design principles in technology development, adhering to accessibility standards like WCAG, and ensuring seamless integration of assistive technologies. The discussions highlighted the importance of actionable policy recommendations and technological advancements to address accessibility challenges. AI-enabled accessible OER and other innovations are central to fostering equitable digital environments. Global collaboration among stakeholders was identified as crucial for scaling these solutions and ensuring their sustainability. The session underscored the value of collaboration between Dynamic Coalitions (DCs), showcasing the complementarity and richness that emerge from joint discussions. By leveraging the expertise of multiple DCs, the session illustrated how diverse perspectives can drive innovative and inclusive solutions. Participants emphasized the critical need for the active participation of persons with lived experience of disability in all stages of development, from

planning and implementation to execution and evaluation. Their insights ensure that solutions are not only inclusive but also practical and effective. This approach aligns with the goals of the Global Digital Compact, which seeks to foster a more inclusive digital future for all. Open Solutions, and specifically Open Educational Resources (OER), were recognized as tools in fostering accessibility and inclusion. As digital public goods, they contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and align with the principles articulated in the Dubai Declaration. Their role in democratizing access to knowledge and technology, particularly for marginalized communities, cannot be overstated. The session reaffirmed the necessity of universal design, inclusive participation, and open solutions as key drivers for achieving a barrier-free digital future. By fostering collaboration across sectors and integrating inclusive policies, the global community can make significant strides toward digital inclusion. The commitment to these principles will not only benefit persons with disabilities but will also enrich the broader digital landscape, ensuring that emerging technologies serve as tools for empowerment and equity.
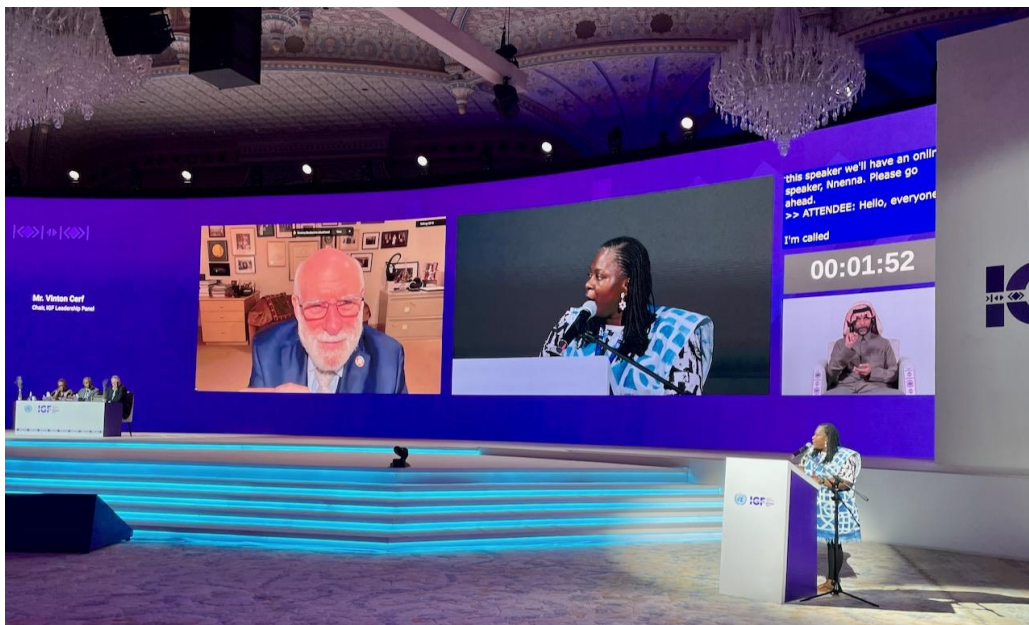

DCAD IGF Fellowship

In 2023, DCAD launched our DCAD Travel to the IGF Fellowship. This fellowship funded by Vint Cerf allowed for 5 fellows to travel to the IGF. Last year we hosted two Japanese fellows and three other fellows from Europe, Africa, and the Asia Pacific regions. This year, 2024 we have close to 130 applications, about 20% of the candidates were shortlisted by the Evaluation committee and then a further short list was created to help the committee narrow down the selection. In the end, we selected four fellows from Mexico, Kenya, Cameroon, and the Bahamas to attend and they indeed made an impact.

Our fellows were very active both on the exhibit floor

Adding their comments and suggestions to main sessions and to the IGF Taking Stock Session on how to improve the IGF.

We gratefully thank all Committee members, Judith Hellerstein, Dr. Muhammad Shabbir, Deidre Williams, Giacomo Mazzone and Dr. Muhammad Loutfy of GICT for their efforts and countless hours of dedication to help us select our fellows.

As a follow up to the fellowship, DCAD will contribute a list of items and issues to improve for next years IGF.

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. Joly also created the fellowship form and administered it on our Website. He then provided us with the results of the website gives DCAD the flexibility to host a number of surveys 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