Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)

Face-to-Face Meeting Report (as of 23 December 2016)

Wednesday 7 December 2016, at IGF 2016, Jalisco, Mexico

Chairman of this DCAD meeting: Ms **Andrea Saks,** DCAD Coordinator and Chairman of the ITU Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF), USA

1. Opening remarks and introduction to the DCAD

Ms Andrea Saks, DCAD Coordinator and ITU-T JCA-AHF Chair, welcomed the meeting participants.

Mr Bruno Ramos, Regional Director of the ITU Regional Office for the Americas Region, introduced DCAD which was formed during the second Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 2007. Since then, DCAD works to facilitate interaction between relevant bodies and to ensure that ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons is included in the discussions around the Internet Governance and to assist the IGF Secretariat and host countries to make all meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. DCAD aims to help create a future where all individuals have equal access to the opportunities through ICT. DCAD has now around 50 members made up of representatives from all over the world from organizations for persons with disabilities, UN agencies, international organizations, policy makers, industry, academia, civil society and experts on accessibility and persons with disabilities as individual experts.

Then Mr. Ramos introduced a number of initiatives and activities on accessibility conducted by ITU and other organizations in the Americas region, especially the annual event on [Accessible Americas](#), the last one of which was held in Mexico City in November 2016.

He summarized the conclusions identified from those forums which are also described in [the event report](#). This report emphasizes the importance of; Governments' role on promoting web accessibility; collaborative efforts among public and private sectors; universities' role on education on accessibility issues; active participation of persons with disabilities; ICT operators and manufactures' role in promoting the development of accessible services and equipment; recognition and awards as incentives in promoting ICT accessibility; promotion of open source accessible applications or a possible nation-wide license for availability and affordability of accessible applications.

He highlighted the need of more visibility and more promotion on the accessibility activities.

2. Report on IGFSA General Assembly

Mr Markus Kummer, Secretary of the IGFSA, reported on the meeting of the IGFSA General Assembly which took place on 5 December at IGF 2016, by highlighting an anonymous donation which allowed five members of DCAD to travel to Mexico and participate in the IGF2016 meetings. He expressed his gratitude to Mr Kyle Schulman and Ms Judy Okite for working very hard to organize travel and transport for everyone. Andrea Saks acknowledged her appreciation of the work that Mr Markus Kummer, Mr Kyle

Schulman, Ms Judy Okite as well as the anonymous donner for making it possible for persons with disabilities to attend IGF 2016.

3. Review the Accessibility of IGF2016

Ms Judy Okite, Free Software and Open Source Foundation in Africa (FOSSFA), explained her observations about the actual accessibility of the IGF 2016 meetings. She pointed out the following points:

Communication: she couldn't get information on the responsible person for persons with disabilities for the IGF 2016 until she arrived in Mexico.

Transport: There was no accessible transport for persons with disabilities at the airport, thus she had to take a taxi to her hotel which was difficult for her to climb into. With regards to the transport from the hotel to the venue, she had requested in advance for a small car be provided as she cannot step into a van, or high sided vehicle. However this request wasn't understood correctly by the organizer despite the fact that she kept repeatedly sharing this information with them.

Hotel: Despite her beforehand request for an accessible room at her hotel, no accessible room was available upon her arrival, and she had to wait until 15:00 of the following day to get one. Moreover, the washroom and the toilet of this accessible room were not accessible, as they were very slippery. Then the bed was ten inches high so she needed to jump on to it as she can't climb. There needs to be a qualified person to check all venues for accessible rooms and evaluate. What is deemed an accessible room by some may not be really be accessible in practical terms.

Note from the coordinator: "DCAD will be looking into the writing of additonal guidelines for Host countries about what makes a hotel room an accessible room and training of staff both the professional and volunteer helpers regarding such amenities so that accessbile rooms can be checked in advance, properly described and later reserved for person with disabilities.

Venue:

Onsite registration: it was across the street, walking to the registration wasn't accessible.

Lifts: they should have been more clearly indicated. Large visible signage is helpful to all.

Washroom: there weren't any handrails to assist persons with disabilities.

Ms Okite concluded by highlighting that what makes things accessible are the amenities, not about big spaces

Mr Gerry Ellis, Feel The BenefIT, pointed out three issues that he found to be inaccessible for persons who are blind. Firstly, the online registration has Captcha method of verification that the user is not a robot. Since this is visual, it is totally inaccessible for blind persons.

Secondly, there should be accessibility training with the help of local organizations of people with disabilities. This is important, to correctly identify and checked beforehand the accessibility of hotels, the setting up of registration booths etc.

Thirdly, not only the venue itself, but also the whole process of the stay for the conferences should be accessible. There should be guides of what is accessible in the areas near hotels including restaurants, the location of night meetings, and any other facilities for enjoyment during the stay.

Mr Abdoulaye Dembele, Co-Rapporteur of ITU-D Question 7/1 "Access to telecommunication/ICT services by persons with disabilities and with specific needs" stated that the bathroom of his first hotel was not accessible.

Ms Andrea Saks raised that the accessibility booth which was available at the venue has been a good solution in providing accessibility information and did provide help when requested. They were knowledgeable about the building, but it was clear they were not clear on what to expect. Ms Judith Hellerstein, Hellerstein & Associates, pointed that the staff should have been given more training on Accessbility while the booth itself was a good idea.

Ms Gunela Astbrink of Women with Disabilities Australia, suggested two possible improvements to the points that Mr Gerry Ellis raised. Firstly, she reminded that Captcha can become accessible by introducing audio Captcha questioning, e.g., some simple calculations (like 1 + 1 = 2) so that a robot could not use it. Secondly, restaurants near the recommended hotel venues could be advised beforehand to provide a menus in large print, or if possible in Braille, which make the visit a pleasant one.

4. Suggested updates to the [DCAD Accessibility Guidelines 2015](#)

Ms Gunela Astbrink and Mr Gerry Ellis presented their suggestions for updating the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines. Its intention is to help the IGF Secretariat to improve accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities and persons with age-related disabilities during the IGF meetings. The plan is the suggested revision will be available for public comment, and the new version is to be in place in time for the IGF 2017. Ms Astbrink stressed that it is important to decide the level of acceptance of each section, such as mandatory or desirable, which was also raised at the DCAD session at IGF 2015. She also explained a number of useful references in Annex 3 which include guidelines of UN agencies, Governments, and NGOs. Then Mr Ellis complemented by highlighting the importance of the remote participation part, for which he suggested to have it as a separate document, as it needs to cover the needs of blind and deaf people, subtitles, captions and chat boxes which should be accessible. He invited those who experienced remote participation tools to contribute to further develop the guidelines. DCAD will also be reviewing as a group the updating work of the DCAD Accessbility Guidelines during the course of 2017.

Ms Valentine Hvale Pellizzerfrom Bosnia Herzegovina, expressed her appreciation to the efforts made to develop the Guidelines, and stated they would use it for their conferences. She also said that she was surprised at the fact that it was still needed to discuss universal access at IGF.

Andrea Saks suggested an idea on a contest of developing an accessible remote participation tool. There are still problems with all accessible remote participation tools. Some solve some of the problems that others ignore. There is no uniformity of design with any of them with regard to Accessbility of use for persons with disabilities.

Ms Judith Hellerstein explained that there was work being done in IETF on testing on remote tools. She pointed that the tools that are accessible for PCs are not always accessible for mobile devices such as the iPad. She also introduced the recognition of a problem that a lot of tools do not t have the ability to call out to people audibly.

Mr Lambert van Eneestelroo, board member of an institution with people with light and severe mental disabilities, stated that in our society where the life is getting more complex and that a lot of things are

digital, it becomes more difficult to support people with this form of disability. To raise awareness of this point, he suggested to have another workshop in the future that would highlight these disabilities.

5. Accessible screen readers

Mr Gerry Ellis explained that those who are blind often use screen readers but most are expensive. There are also incompatibility issues with between screen readers and some remote participation tools. Mr Ellis suggested NVDA as an open source screen reader that is available for everyone. Details will follow at the next DCAD meeting that will be also be captioned.

6. Closing remarks

Mr Abdoulaye Dembele suggested to share national experiences on accessibility especially those of developing countries during the IGF so as to be efficient in discussing needs as well as deploying accessibility solutions and concepts for change.

Ms Judy Okite highlighted that she was still insisting there needs to be a person with disabilities as a contact person within the IGF Secretariat. Perhaps the host country could reach out to organizations that work with persons with disabilities and preferably those which employed persons with disabilities for advice and help in the future.

Ms Esther Deprietas, a graduate student from University of Brazil, asked the meeting participants how to make accessibility a reality in her university. The discussion would be continued off-line due to the time limitation. DCAD will extend an invitation to Ms Deprietas to attend a DCAD captioned call meeting in the future.

Andrea Saks closed the meeting, and thanked the meeting participants for their valuable contributions, the caption writer, and the DCAD secretariat, the IGF secretariat including excellent technical staff for their support.

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