DCAD Meeting Report

Tuesday 10 November 2015, at Tenth Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), João Pessoa, Brazil

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

Vice Chairman of this DCAD meeting: Francesca Cesa Bianchi, Vice President of the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict), USA

Remote moderator of this DCAD meeting: Derrik Cogburn, American University at the School of International Service and Executive Director of The Institute on Disability and Public policy, Washington DC, USA

Participants:

Geetha Hariharn, Center for the Internet and Society in India, India

Elaine Araujo, Teacher for the Federal Technology de Brazil, Campina Grande Brazil

Haley Slafer, Internews NGO, Washington DC, USA

Magda Berhe Johnson, Spider (Swedish Program for ICTs in Developing Regions), Sweden

Patricia, Communications Converged Regulator of Broadcasting, Kenya

George Fernandez, Ministry of Education and Science, Portugal

Fernando Botelho, F123 Consulting, Brazil

Gunela Astbrink, ISOC and the Principal of GSA Infocomm, Australia

Moedjiono, Civil Society, Indonesia

Tracy Weisler, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Washington DC, USA

Apologies:

Judy Okite, Free Software and Open Source foundation for Africa (FOSSFA), Kenya

Ginger Paque, Diplo Foundation USA

MEETING SUMMARY

Ms Andrea Saks who chaired this face to face DCAD meeting pointed out before the actually meeting started to the attendees, that the meeting started a full half hour late because of the fact that no one in the IGF secretariat has read and properly used the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines of 2014.

She stated that the same problems occur every year and which is why the Guidelines were written in the first place. Also the lack of continuity of staff from year to year made is vital that there be a focal point for accessibility within the IGF secretariat who is responsible for knowing how remote participation works for persons with disabilities. Once the requirements were explained the person in charge who then explained to the volunteers the meeting went well technically and persons with disabilities were able to participate remotely. The student volunteers did a good job and learned what need to be done. These repetitive problems could have been avoided if also as requested year after year, that there should be at least 15 to 20 minute time gap before any DCAD or accessibility workshop meeting to resolves any technical difficulties and to connect persons who are blind to WebEx. There should be no meetings in front of these meetings to prevent delays from taking away from the time allocated to the meetings. This was promised by the technical head in Bali.

DCAD meetings should also not be on the first day so that DCAD members can evaluate the accessibility accommodation throughout the IGF meetings for feedback to the IGF secretariat. It was noticed that there wasn't any captioning for persons with disabilites in day zero. It was found out later that though the secretariat had requested captioning for those meetings of the Host, an arbitrary decision was made by the Host country not to provide it. There should be someone in the secretariat to check that this does not happen again. Though there was only one sign language interpreter present in day Zero using Brazilian sign language. Unfortunately she was in the dark located in the middle of the audience and not in the fully lighted stage area. The other area that was difficult was the insistence of the Host that persons with Disabilites pay for any transportation that was not a part of the regular transportation even though that the transportation provided was inaccessible. This matter was cleared before the meeting started. This is again emphasizes why the DCAD Accessibility guidelines must become the standard to be followed by all Hosts and the secretariat for any future meetings.

MEETING REPORT

The Chair then welcomed all participants to the meetings after all technical difficulties were resolved. After the self-introductions by the meeting participants, the chair introduced the mandate of DCAD, stressing its mission to make the IGF more accessible (both on premises and remotely) and to highlight the importance of accessibility within internet governance, the agenda was presented and accepted. The meeting then mainly focused on discussing the accessibility of the IGF 2015 remote participation, and the revised DCAD Accessibility Guidelines which were to be submitted to the IGF Secretariat as an output of DCAD.

Review of IGF 2015 remote participation

Though Cisco generously gives the license to use the basic form of WebEx to IGF as sponsorship, some accessibility problems have been reported, including, the dual audio channel problem which makes

remote participants who are blind unable to access the meeting room through WebEx. After discussion, DCAD agreed three points: 1) Mr Derrick Cogburn to make Blackboard Collaborate available to DCAD for free as it is accessible for those who use open source screen readers, such as JAWS, NVDA, according to him, 2) DCAD to communicate the accessibility problems of the current remote participation with IGF, 3) DCAD to communicate with WebEx and Cisco in order to ask to accelerate their work to make WebEx accessible. The last point was strengthened by the argument made by Mr Gunela Astbrink that Cisco has highlighted its work on accessibility at a recent huge conference in Australia on the national disability insurance scheme.

Review of the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines (Lead editor: Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi)

The latest version of the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines has been posted for a public review. Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi presented the document introducing comments made. This is a living document and the 2014 edition and the 2015 edition are available at the ITU website. Topics and comments reviewed at the meeting are below and those agreed upon would be added to the current draft of the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines:

Medical emergency information: In reply to a comment on whether DCAD addressed the points of having trained medical emergency team, Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi introduced that the program for the IGF2015 included useful information on, such as, the number for emergency call, medical center and ambulance. Ms Andrea Saks highlighted that DCAD doesn't go into how medical profession handles medical emergencies, regardless of person with/without disabilities.

Meeting registration form: In reply to a comment on what 'reasonable accommodation' stated at 2.1 of the guidelines was, it was agreed to refer to Article 2 of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). It was also suggested by Mr Derrik Cogburn to refer to Article 9 of CRPD for 'accessible format' at the same section.

It was also suggested by a commentator to include transportation issues, and Ms Andrea Saks gave an example of unacceptable possible extra charges for extra transport for persons with disabilities in the past IGF, and she suggested to include contact details of an accessibility focal point on the form so that persons with disabilities can discuss their specific situation including transportation.

Ms Gunela Astbrink suggested to include examples in the future edition so that those who are not very familiar with accessibility issues can understand what the issue is. Ms Andrea Saks agreed and also added that reference ITU documents on accessible meetings would be useful. They are listed here and are free to download.

- FSTP-ACC-RemPart "Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all"
- FSTP-AM "Guidelines for accessible meetings"

Meeting venue accessibility: Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi gave an example of problem of meeting venue accessibility for people using wheelchairs. Availability of and accessibility to lifts without using stairs is important.

Technical accessibility: Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi suggested to keep the sentence about an example of participants who have to switch back and forth from the audio of the meeting when they navigate the webpage with a screen reader. This suggestion was agreed by DCAD.

Meeting materials accessibility: Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi raised a question if IGF could provide Braille displays and/or screen readers on loan for those who need them. Mr. Fernando Bothelho said it would be a nice option to get more local participation depending on the country of persons with disabilities. It was also agreed to include in the registration form a mention of an email or a contact for accessibility accommodation.

Make presentations accessible: It was suggested that speakers and presenters be briefed about using the DCAD guidelines on accessibility prior to an event. Ms Andrea Saks highlighted the importance of identifying oneself each time one takes the floor, so that captioners and sign language interpreters can identify who is speaking

Sign language: Ms Andrea Saks suggested to reference WFD and IHOH, as they use "International Sign" ("International Sign Language" does not exist) for large groups of persons who use different sign languages. This enables persons with different sign languages as their native sign languages to be able to communicate with each other. Its vocabulary is small and not detailed enough and thus it is not recommended or used for technical work at the ITU standards meetings. She emphasized that it is called "International Sign", but not called International Sign Language because unfortunately among persons who do not have a disability often think that there is such a sign language.

She also shared her experience at the meeting of the day before that an interpreter were in the dark, not on the stage during a meeting, and that deaf participants were not insured to sit in the front row. There was no public announcement or signage clearly stating where the sign interpreter would be. It was also suggested to book sign language interpreters as early as possible because of the shortage of qualified sign language interpreters and that there needs to be more than one to insure proper breaks.

The degree of acceptance and use of the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines. It was discussed whether the document becomes a requirement to all Hosts and recognized recommendation to the IGF. While many host countries may consider certain accessibility requirements when they decide to host an international conference, they need guidance to provide full accessibility in line with the UNCRPD. While it was said that certain additional requirements may discourage potential hosts on their decision to become a host accessibility can't be ignored. Ms Andrea Saks suggested the DCAD Guidelines to be used in the spirit of the UNCRPD and that there be a person in the IGF secretariat be available for subsequent explanations for the Host's responsibility.

Mr Fernando Botelho suggested to have two levels, such as basic requirements and suggestions, in the document. Mr Derrick Cogburn stated that it was quite likely that host countries had signed and ratified therefore had committed themselves to the UNCRPD. Therefore certain accessibility requirements, should already be built-in to the contractual arrangement between the host and IGF. Ms Gunela Astbrink suggested to use 'must ensure' as standard language for the accessibility considerations which are absolute requirements, and summarize them at the top of the document. Ms Andrea Saks appreciated all the suggestions but she suggested to keep the document as it was at this moment as the document had to be submitted to IGF main session on Dynamic Coalitions IGF shortly. Due the fact of

the lost half hour of the meeting it was not possible at this time. Since the DCAD Guidelines was a living document it could be updated and revision could be done for 2016.

Ms Andrea Saks also suggested to include a sentence that "all host agreements must provide accessibility and/or equivalent accommodation for persons with disabilities in all meeting arrangements. This should include interpretation access and ICTs in line with the UN CRPD".

Other comments on the guidelines

Ms Francesca Cesi Bianchi also introduced comments which had been made at a meeting in Colombia a week before. Firstly, it would be nice to include sign language interpreters on some part of the big screen of meetings. Secondly, anonymous feedback on accessibility should be used as part of learning process. Then, a checklist to validate equipment should be provided by the organizers, and lastly, ground rules should be agreed and posted publicly beforehand.

Further DCAD activities at IGF 2015

During the 15-min slot given to all Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) at the IGF main session on Dynamic Coalitions on Wednesday 11, Ms Andrea Saks presented the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines. It was also agreed to acknowledge all the efforts on accessibility made by the host for this meeting, and to ask for a focal point in IGF who would be responsible for and can reply accessibility issues.

It was announced that there would be a workshop on "Empowering the next billion by improving accessibility" co-hosted by DCAD and Digital ICT Global Initiative for Inclusive Technology on Friday 13, as well as a workshop on "Mobile and IoT Expand Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities" on Wednesday 11 where several DCAD members would give talks.

Unfortunately this was in direct conflict with the DC main session meeting and therefore many who needed to attend both sessions on accessibility and the Main DC session meeting could not do so. This conflict was noted and expressed well in advance of the IGF meeting in Brazil by email from the Coordinator of DCAD to Secretariat but no response was received.

Any other business

Ms Andrea Saks quickly went though the other agenda items. She highlighted that she would be open to discuss with all participants and DCAD members any details that needed updating in future meetings. DCAD will continue updating the guidelines by email reflector communicating and at future meetings via captioned conference calls. Mr Geetha Hariharn expressed his expectation to see additional item on the agenda to discuss and propose stronger language of WSIS+10 document for persons with disabilities, and Ms Andrea Saks agreed to try and see if this could be done.

Consideration of having a nomination to the MAG for a person with disabilities was suggested, as it would allow to keep making inputs on accessibility to that level. This was well received and future action was agreed to be taken with regard to this suggestion

The meeting was then out of time. It was agreed that Francesca Cesi Bianchi would amend and add all suggestions to the DCAD Guidelines as agreed at the meeting for presenting to the Main session on Dynamic Coalitions.

Future meetings would be decided by reflector and would be by captioned Conference calls.

The meeting was then closed by the chairman.

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