**United Nations Expert Meeting on Building Inclusive Societies and Development through Promotion of Accessible Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); Emerging issues and trends**
**Tokyo, Japan**
**19 – 21 April 2012**

**Executive Summary**[*]

Organized by the

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
in cooperation with the
United Nations Information Centre (Tokyo), and the Nippon Foundation

United Nations Information Center
Tokyo Japan
19-21 April 2012

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[*] This report has not been formally edited.

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## *Executive Summary*

The Expert Group Meeting was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo(UNIC-Tokyo) in close collaboration with the Nippon Foundation(Tokyo, Japan) from 19 to 21 April 2012 in Tokyo. The Meeting reviewed and discussed issues and trends in accessible information and communications technologies (ICTs) and development. The Meeting had a special plenary session on 20 April to review the significant role of accessible ICTs has played in natural disaster and emergency responses, including in the context of the 2011 East Japan Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami and other selected national experiences.

The Meeting noted that accessible and usable ICTs are critical "enablers" that would allow persons with disabilities, an estimated 15 per cent of the world's population, or one billion persons, to have equal opportunities for their full and effective participation in society and development. It urged Governments to incorporate accessibility in their policies and programmes as a means and goal of development for building an inclusive society for all. The Meeting also directed special attention to the important contributions of the United Nations system organizations, in their respective mandates, in raising awareness and building capacities of all stakeholders to promoting accessible and usable ICTs.

The Meeting identified the following principles for promoting disability-inclusive disaster and emergency preparedness, responses and recovery policies and strategies, including:(1) involving the entire community in a coordinated way, ensuring that persons with disabilities and their needs be integrated in risk identification and disaster and emergency preparedness and responses; (2) engaging and empowering persons with disabilities as agents of change in all disaster and emergency-related response activities so that persons with disabilities can become the "force multipliers";(3) promoting sustainability, accessibility and universal design in risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response and recovery; and (4) planning for resilience as well as for different physical and ICT infrastructure capacities, including backup options in key services and in critical ICTs for disaster and emergency management.

Participants considered and adopted in the final plenary meeting the findings and recommendations submitted by the three Working Groups of the Meeting: (1) policy frameworks and institutional arrangements to promote accessible information and communications technologies (ICTs); (2) technical standards and regulations related to promotion of accessible and usable information and communication technologies (ICTs); and (3) accessible information and communication technologies (ICTs) in disasters and emergency preparedness and management.