ITU Side Event to the 12 CoSP-CRPD

ICT Accessibility: The key to inclusive digital society

Monday 10 June | Conference Room 6 | 1:15 to 2:30 p.m.

ICTs play a vital role in ALL people's empowerment, and represent an enabler for inclusion in society. Additionally ICTs have the potential to quickly and radically improve people's lives, for example by facilitating access to information, basic services, healthcare and education, but these technologies are not always accessible or available to everyone. Therefore, to achieve these goals the ICT should be available, accessible and affordable for all.

Accessible ICT are fundamental when we seek to ensure inclusiveness of all people in the digital society as are the only one that bring to the users the "equity" aspect in addition to the "equality". Greater ICT accessibility promotes the educational, social, economic and political inclusion of all people, irrespective of gender, age, ability, location or financial means and contribute to building an inclusive digital society.

UN CRPD aims to ensure PwD from around the world can enjoy the same rights and opportunities as everyone else, to carry out their lives as full citizens and contribute to society. Articles 9 and 30 of the CRPD emphasize that "accessibility of ICTs is an integral part of the access rights of PwD". Moreover, several SDGs highlight the impact of ICT accessibility in the development of global inclusive societies.

Governments have a leading role in developing and implementing comprehensive policies and strategies for ICT accessibility, and bear the duty of ensuring all citizens, including persons with disabilities, enjoy the same rights and opportunities. Therefore, the adoption of effective policies and standards at a national level can create an enabling environment for ICT accessibility and thereby accelerate implementation of inclusive societies at national and regional level. However, making accessible ICTs widely available and affordable also requires involvement of additional relevant actors, such as procurers, manufacturers and service providers, which should invest in accessible ICTs and pioneer this new business opportunity offered by the global requirement of digital inclusiveness.

It is estimated that in the next 30 years the number of people affected by some form of disability could constitute half of the world's population, all of whom will require accessible information and communication technologies (ICTs). Accessibility of ICTs for persons with disabilities (PwD) consists of equitable access to information and communication, without limitation.

The promotion and implementation of ICT accessibility represent not only a target but also a consolidated effort by all involved stakeholders to jointly ensure through awareness raising,

policies and practices as well as provision of resources including standards, trainings, guidelines, tools and sharing of good practices, equitable access to information and communication, without limitation, as a tool for self-empowerment and inclusion in the digital economy of all people without discrimination.

Opening remarks: H.E. Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga, President of the 12th CoSP-CRPD

Speakers

- H.E. Ms. Catherine Hughes, Minister of Public Telecommunications of Guyana **- TBC**
- Mr. Jia Yong, Vice President, China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF)
- Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development (UN DESA) **- TBC**
- Ms. Inmaculada Placencia Porrero, Senior Expert, Disability and Inclusion Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (European Commission)
- Ms. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu, Senior Programme Officer, Digital Inclusion Division, and Focal Point for ICT Accessibility (ITU-D)
- Mr. Alejandro Moledo, Policy Coordinator, European Disability Forum
- Mr. Axel Leblois, President of G3ict
- Rehabilitation International - **TBC**

Moderator

Ms. Ursula Wynhoven, ITU Representative to the United Nations