

Introduction to accessibility needs during COVID-19 pandemic

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COVID-19 -- Unprecedented Pandemic

- So far, there are close to 14 million people affected by COVID-19 and about 600,000 people have died from it. And the number is still growing.
- It is probably the worst global disaster after World War 2.
- COVID-19 affects everyone, everyone, but the result is not always “equal”.

Vulnerable people are most severely affected

- And it is the vulnerable segment of the people that are most severely affected, in particular those with disabilities.
- “the world’s **1 billion** people living with disabilities are among the hardest hit by COVID-19 (UN Secretary-General Mr Antonio Guterres)
- Persons with disabilities face a lack of accessible public health information, significant barriers to implement basic hygiene measures

Video from ESCAP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWDIwsFrHD4&feature=youtu.be>



WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

ICT and Media for fight against COVID-19

- “COVID-19 is the first pandemic in human history, where technology and social media are being used on a massive scale to keep people safe, productive and connected, while being physically apart.” (ITU/WHO)
- ICT is an essential tool in providing vital health information to the wider population
- this is especially true for persons with disabilities.
- ITU is also working with persons with disabilities worldwide

Some useful standard ICT

- Telephone relay service (including Video Relay Service)
- Remote Sign Language Interpretation (Video Remote Interpretation)
- Closed-Captioning
- Audio Description
- Audio Navigation system
- Internet Protocol TV (IPTV)
- Total Conversation

Importance of ICT/Media Infrastructure

- An estimated 3.6 billion people do not have access to the Internet
 - Broadband and IP are not ubiquitous enough just now
- ITU and WHO are promoting the use of SMS and texting to provide essential information to those areas
- Broadcasting and radio may also be important means to disseminate information

Issues to be addressed

- Provide good ICT infrastructure for all -- ITU's Connect 2030 "An agenda to connect all to a better world"
- Accessible Media
- Affordable ICT
- Ubiquitous accessibility - from "medical model" to "social model"
- "Inclusion" and "diversity", not "being equal" -- everybody has different needs

ICT needs to and can address all these issues

Thank you