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| **PHYSICAL OPEN CONSULTATIONS OF THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET-RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES** Geneva, 15 February 2016 |  |
| INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION |  |
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PHYSICAL OPEN CONSULTATIONS OF THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET-RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

**Compilation of responses to the Online Open Consultation
(October 2015- January 2016)**

The Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 instructed the ITU Council to revise its Resolution 1344 to direct the Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet), limited to Member States, with open consultation to all stakeholders, and to conduct such open consultation according to specific guidelines. As a result the ITU Council in its 2015 session resolved that the CWG-Internet should hold both open online consultation and physical open consultation meetings, with remote participation, within a defined period prior to each CWG-Internet meeting.

ITU Council also resolved that all relevant inputs received in the open consultation will be available to the CWG-Internet and all other stakeholders on a dedicated publicly accessible webpage of the CWG-Internet website. Relevant inputs from the open online consultation on the topic(s) decided by the CWG-Internet will form the basis of discussion at the physical open consultation meetings and all relevant responses will be submitted to the CWG-Internet for consideration of the issues chosen for its next meeting.

On 2 October 2015 the Council Working Group decided to hold an open consultation (online and physical) on the following issue:

“**Access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs**

* What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?
* What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?
* What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?
* What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?”

You can find below the compilation of the responses received.

*NOTE: Please note that due to the different formats used by the online respondents:*

*• All inputs to the “Comment box” of the online form- serving either as sole contribution, summary or comment- have been copied and pasted (unless identical with the attachment);*

*• Attachments of reasonable length (up to 2 pages) have been copied and pasted, as well as hyperlinked;*

*• Longer attachments have been hyperlinked only;*

*• When available, separately provided summaries have been copied and pasted. In a couple of indicated cases the summary has been taken from the submitted document itself.*

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|  | **Date** | **Submitter** | **Response**  |
|  | November 12, 2015 | [Association for Proper Internet Governance (Switzerland)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=15) | States have a general obligation to facilitate access to ICTs, including the Internet, by people with disabilities. This obligation flows both from general UN treaties and from ICT-specific instruments such as the 2012 International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), resolutions of the World Telecommunications Standardization Assembly, and ITU Recommendations. A significant number of states did not sign the ITRs in Dubai in 2012. Almost all of those states indicated that they required additional time in order to consider the implications of certain provisions, in particular those that were approved at the last minute. Accession to the ITRs will facilitate access to Internet by persons with disabilities, and accession by non-signatories would appear feasible because legal analysis of the provisions that required further consideration indicates that they do not actually have the effects that had raised concerns during the conference in Dubai. For greater clarity, we propose a declaration that can be made by states that accede to the ITRs. [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/15/CWG%202016.pdf)  |
| 1.
 | November 18, 2015 | [European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) (Denmark)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=16) | 1. Hearing aid users cannot use headsets/headphones like normal hearing people. A large number of Apps are based on this functionality. 2. In workplaces, trains, airplanes, etc you cannot use loudspeakers, as you're not expected to disturb others. That takes you back to item 1: headsets/headphones 3. YouTube uploads enormous amounts of content every minute. The trend is increasing, and a large portion of this content requires that it be streamed to the ear (training videos, conferences, etc). 4. Some security codes are sent using audio (for the visually impaired). If you are both visually and hearing impaired (and huge numbers are), this is unfortunate as others may "listen in" on the security code. |
| 1.
 | November 26, 2015 | [Malawi Council for the Handicapped](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=17) | Blind and hard of hearing lack trainers in special needs, ICT skills sets and assistive learning devices at the council and government is not doing enough to fill this gap leaving person with disabilities disadvantaged to accessing ICT skills l hope through this forum will come to the rescue of persons with disabilities on the challenges they face. Malawi Council for the Handicapped has two vocational centers to train persons with disabilities in various program but lag behind in ICT literacy putting them at a disadvantage in this computer age. |
| 1.
 | December 03, 2015 | [Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=18)   | All elements present in a URL should be accessible: from web page architecture, to its design, and its content. Navigation should be possible to all people, and specially people with disabilities, the aged, and those with any specific needs. It is crucial we raise awareness and train, at a very general level, of the easy solutions available to make Internet as much accessible as possible to all. ITU URL perhaps could be in itself a showcase of accessibility, and also offer a tool to evaluate webpages for accessibility. |
|  | December 30, 2015 | [My Blind Spot, Inc. (United States)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=19) | First, if we are going to have any faith in this process, why is the link for the audio capture not labeled or tagged properly?this |
|  | January 05, 2016 | [RI2 (Pakistan)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=20) |  - Attachment –---------------**1. What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?**There could be a number of challenges in terms of access to the internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs. This may include the lack of necessary tools and applications that will facilitate the use of Internet by persons with disabilities thereby creating a special kind of a digital divide. There can possibly be 3 different challenges i.e.1. No Internet access at all for persons with disabilities and specific needs just like it is for all other people. E.g. no internet infrastructure, non-availability of Internet in a given area.2. Internet access is available but the necessary tools and applications are not. E.g. screen/website/text readers for visually impaired person, and video captions for deaf, and accessibility features in smart phones, and computers for persons with disabilities.3. Internet access and the tools/applications are available, but the knowledge and skill to use these tools/applications is not there.**2. What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?**In the given scenario (Internet related public policy issues) technology vendors and software developers have been comping up with technology product that facilitates the access to Internet by persons with disabilities and specific needs. See for example:* Accessibility features in iPhone/iPad
* Website/text readers for blind and visually impaired persons
* Voice driven commands for those who cannot type

Similarly, encouraging and supporting the development of tools and applications that will facilitate the use of Internet by persons with disabilities and specific needs can be another best practice to address these challenges. Alongside, special training sessions can be arranged to train them use these tools/applications to be able to effectively make use of the Internet.**3. What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?**As discussed above, the challenge can be of 3 different natures in the given situation i.e. access, tools, and knowledge.If any of the three fundamentals is missing, it will be challenging for persons with disability and specific needs to access and use Internet. These gaps can be filled by a coordinated effort among the industry stakeholders thereby covering there corresponding area. E.g.* Telcos/ISPs could facilitate the Access part
* Technology vendors/Software developer could facilitate the development of tools and applications required
* Knowledge firms/ Trainings providers/associations etc could impart trainings

**4. What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?**Government role is always central when it comes to public policy and in the case of access to Internet by persons with disabilities and specific needs, it obviously is more decisive for the government to facilitate and encourage other stakeholders by providing an enabling environment. Government always has the upper hand and must corroborate industry players to come up with innovative approaches and tools in this regard. This can be done in the shape of subsidies, funding research & development in this area, reducing taxes and duties on tools/software etc that are meant for persons with disabilities and specific needs.Another important role of the government is to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities and specific needs in the online world from abuse and exploitation.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/20/Zakir%20Syed_Response_Public_Consultation_ITU_Jan%202016.pdf) |
|  | January 06, 2016 | [National Telecommunication Corporation (Sudan)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=21) | I am interesting for your consultation for the following issues : 1- the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs. 2- approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges. 3- the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled. 4- the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps. |
|  | January 11, 2016 | [Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información (Ecuador)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=22) | I am attaching the Ecuador proposal about these four questions.--------------**Short summary:**Persons with disabilities and specific needs face challenges in accessing the Internet, like Availability of Internet service, Internet service costs, Lack of usage of assistive software, Little or no formal educational instruction, Lack of instruction in the use of technology and support benefits, Lack of appropriate equipment adapted to the type of disability, Lack of Websites not accessible to navigate, Basic financial services, recreation, etc. not accessible online in digital level, lack of investment and injection of capital for infrastructure improvements.To address these challenges, there should be a change or reform of contents adapted with web accesibility, public services accessible to people with disabilities, a promotion of teleworking, social government projects to link citizens with the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to strengthen its use, diffusion of contents related to accessibility for people with disabilities by means of digital and free of charge means of communication (webinars, hangouts) thus improving the quality of life and inclusion of people with disabilities and their families, at the workplace and everyday life. Also e-commerce as a tool to promote skills development and promote the employment of people with disabilities. The project of linking ICT like a robot pet with children with disabilities in early education, is based on games that allow improvement of the social and emotional development of infants and strengthen its autonomy and initiatives.The gaps in addressing these challenges are the generation of public policy in universal accessibility, projects where communities, associations, federations of persons with disabilities participate as active entities, generate citizen assemblies focused on accessibility work in our country, through community labor (mingas) with which you can improve the access infrastructure and link the community in this process, Socialize with greater force a campaign of civic equality and integration from the use of the right words that do not generate infringement, working in an inclusive education plan, work with the church for concrete actions to link the community with people with disabilities, Create programs and training opportunities and access to technology for people with disabilities, Link to robotics for the formation processes of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Down Syndrome.The government should generate public policy in universal accessibility, build a culture of ICT accessibility in the country with greater force and strategic alliances, have accessible infrastructure both physical and web, reduce the cost of assistive technologies, and socialize policies related to this area through forums, lectures, meetings with associations and people from the neighborhood.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/22/Consulta%20Online%20de%20CWG-%20ITU-Traducci%C3%B3n.docx) |
|  | January 12, 2016 | [Edraak Organization for Persons with Disabilities (Sudan)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=23)  | I would like to participate in the Consultation meeting that I am interesting in the accessibility for the persons with disabilities beside my profession in IT and Telecommunications, I am working in disability field and using my profession to assist the PWD in their work and inclusion in the community in addition to assist them to make use of the technology in their daily lives, I am IT and Telecommunications professional and now I studied about the assistive technologies. ---------------SUMMARYOnline Open Consultation (October 2015- January 2016) Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needsAccessibility is a measure of the extent to which a product or service can be used by a person with a disability as effectively as it can be used by a person without that disability.Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needsWhat are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs in accessing and using the Internet (e.g., lack of ICT skill sets etc.)?There are many challenges facing persons with disabilities for using the internet, specially the lack of skills with ICT, there's no enough knowledge with ICT, now all people need the internet for getting the fast information and help in their daily life activities.While the internet seems to be a one-stop shop for all solutions, persons with disabilities find themselves excluded from it due to their inability to either see the screen, use the mouse or keyboard, inability to access content or unfriendly user interface as many of the websites can still be navigated only by using a mouse, most of the audio visuals are not captioned for the use of persons with hearing impairment and web developers use graphics instead of using text, making them unreadable for screen reader users. While discussing the reach and power of the internet, accessibility is one of the topics that need to be addressed. Even though there are many measures for accessibility currently available, they are not being addressed and worked on aggressively to bridge the gap. In the digital age where the internet is ubiquitous and a platform where more and more economic activity is happening, the lack of initiative and accessibility policy is leading to exclusion.What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?We can address the challenges and solving the problems as following:Training for persons with disabilities in ICT skills and how to use the assistive technologies, these training can be held by governments and organizations, that to make it easier for them, also make the devices and assistive technologies available for them, that in some counties maybe difficult to get the assistive devices even if the person has good skills in the ICT, and sometimes the cost is high so they can’t get.The organizations can support on making the assistive technologies and accessibility software or devices available.For persons with hearing disabilities the organizations and development corporation should do the efforts to train them to use the Caption Subtitle and most of video content on the web must be with caption as many websites now try to make captions and and subtitles available in their videos. Youtube is an good example. Also there are many other examples for this.What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?The gaps in addressing the challenges to be full accessible for persons with disabilities can be as following:- Concerning the Internet contents: the problem of some media that are difficult to put in accessible format or in a way that can be accessed by persons with disabilities. Screen reader users, would not be able to access content in graphical or image format. This is also true for documents in pdf formats as not all content in pdf is accessible through screen readers. Content in audio format is inaccessible to persons with hearing impaired. This applies to not only audio files, but also to videos as they usually are accompanied by audio outputs. Additionally, videos are also inaccessible to persons with visual impairment. In order to make audio files and videos universally accessible, videos should be accompanied with narration while both audio files and videos should have captions and sub titles.What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?- A critical step that needs to be taken to make content accessible is to formulate a binding policy that would require all web content developers to ensure accessibility of their content. Also update of acts under it which will make it possible for printed books to be converted into accessible format for persons with print impairment. This in turn will make it possible for millions of people to be able to access information that had remained inaccessible before. It is better to make it compulsory for web developers in all the world to design websites that comply with the requirements for e-accessibility, there is a need to put in place a policy that would mandate strict adherence to norms. The Governments can set up a process to formulate a national policy to ensure accessibility of websites and ICT products and services in each country.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/23/Accessibility.pdf) |
|  | January 13, 2016 | [Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=24) | Online Open Consultation of the ITU Council Working Group (CWG) on “Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and Specific Needs” Name of institution : Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka Note: Please see the attachment.--------------**SUMMARY****Open Consultation - Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needs**Some of the major challenges faced and the specific needs to access and use the internet are accessibility, affordability, availability of assistive devices on the type of disability, poor computer literacy, lack of software/ teachers/ courses/ content development/ funding, physical access points, information/ awareness/ e-accessibility guidelines and navigation maps with real time information, cultural/religious/language barriers and job/self-employment opportunities. Possible approaches and good practices to address challenges include development of telecommunications facilities, introduce Public-Private-People’s-Partnership (4P) model for development of facilities, CSR initiatives, National Policies, availability of modern technologies and development of Human Resources. Accessibility, Affordability, Education, Job Opportunities, Training & HR Developments, Policy Issues, Awareness, Cultural and language barriers, Technical competency and Financial Assistance are the identified gaps that have to be addressed by the Government.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/24/Online%20Open%20Consultation%20of%20the%20ITU%20Council%20Working%20Group%20%28Rev.1%29%20%2008-01-2016.docx)  |
|  | January 13, 2016 | [TURKSAT A.Ş. (Turkey)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=25) | ​**Question 1: Challenges****What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?**Answer to question 1:For blind and purblind people, there are problems in reading letters in small type size and complete disability sight.For deaf people and the people with hard of hearing, there are problems in hearing the conversations in videos and visual media. For physically handicapped people, there are difficulties in using standard computer hardware.**Question 2: Best practices****What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?**Answer to question 2:Magnification vision aids for people who has difficulty in reading letters in small type size (Zoomtext, Deluxe LP-DOS, Narrator Software for blind people (iZoom, Orca, ReadHear), Braille input-output hardware (Navigator, ALVA, BrailleMate) which is reading the Braille text orally can be used for blind people to address their difficulties.Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, Audio and Speech Converter, Audio Amplifiers, Frequency Tuner, Signal systems can be used for deaf people to address their difficulties.Alternative markup tools, screen keyboards, audio-text converters, smart dictionaries, modifier keyboards (stickykeys, mousekeys, repeatkeys etc.) can be used for physically handicapped people to address their difficulties.**Question 3: Gaps****What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?**Answer to question 3:The hardware or software devices might be inadequate for addressing the challenges effectively. Those persons with disabilities and specific needs might not afford for these hardware or software devices.These gaps might be filled by improving the software and hardware devices, providing them for people with financial difficulties free of tax or free of charge if possible by government. **Question 4: Role of governments****What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?**Answer to question 4:Governments has a role as guide, encourager, supporter, provider, financial supporter in addressing these challenges. Also Governments may have a role of providing basis for law enforcement for these services to fill the gaps. |
|  | January 13, 2016 | [University of Sri Jayewardenepura (Sri Lanka)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=26) | this is my document--------------**Access to the internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs**I have been notified about the online open consultation of CWG-Internet by the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka. I am writing to you regarding the above fact on behalf of visually handicapped and visually impaired persons.Visually handicapped people in Sri Lanka have ample opportunities in getting ICT skills. Universities provide a lot of facilities and there are other organizations which support them to learn ICT. When using the internet, the visually handicapped people get the help of screen readers such as NVDA and JAWS, only if they use a laptop or a desktop. But in a world where everything is being done with smart phones, they face a problem in accessing and using the internet in Sinhala language. If you could help develop a TTS software which would enable reading Sinhala, that would be a great help.Visually impaired or handicapped university students need to use the internet almost all the time; for example to download books and search for information. They get the internet connection through cables and dongles. The amount of data provided is insufficient and is given in two slots. When allocated data comes to an end it becomes unbearably slow. This is also a serious problem. The content of certain websites contain mainly pictures and diagrams which the visually handicapped are unable to read. Such websites could be made readable.School text books of Sri Lankan government schools are available in the internet but it’s impossible for the visually handicapped to read since they are not in the Unicode format. If the Educational Publications Department makes these books available in the Unicode format, there will be no difficulty in reading them.I hope the information provided by me will be helpful to your project.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/26/sri%20lanka.docx)  |
|  | January 13, 2016 | [Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=27) |  **Online Open Consultations on Internet and Accessibility"Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needs"****Question 1: Challenges What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?** Answer to question 1:In Georgia the people with disability and Special Education Needs have a various difficulties in accessing and using the internet. - Blind and visually impaired people has not enough devices and knowledge to use them; - Lack of trainers in ICT skills; - Lack of Georgian voice program to get information in Native Language; - Lack of adapted programs in sign language for Deaf people; - Lack of adapted Computer accessories: mouse, keyboard … for people with motor difficulties; **Question 2: Best practices What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?**Answer to question 2:- Good example is “Voice Alphabet Saba” which assists SENs to learn Alphabet quite well; - Only Boarding schools for children with Disability for distance learning are using smart boards. The school connects SEN student with class; - To use some programs for Autistic students by iPad; - By the national curriculum the school has ICT lessons; **Question 3: Gaps What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?** Answer to question 3:- There is no appropriate computer technics for Disabilities in Georgia; To purchase appropriate computer technics; - There is no available computer programs for SENs in Georgian Language; To equip the schools with useful technics, to adapt the computer programs in Georgian Language; - To develop distance education; To equip schools with useful computer and develop teachers skills;- There is not exists development programs for SENs in Georgia Language. There are different ipad programs which assist Autistic children to develop functional, emotional and life skills (ipad programs - Scene Speak, AUTISMXPRESS, Proloquo2Go, Autism I Help-Sorting); - Web pages are not adapted for people with Disability (for Blinds and Deaf); - There was not carried out any research around technology; - The schools have not Brailers for Blind students; **Question 4: Role of governmentsWhat is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?**Answer to question 4:- The State must take responsibility to provide all useful technical equipment for students with Disability; - To Create the action plan for developing and provide people with disability with computer technology; - To create new system/organization which will provide the people with disability with appropriate technical equipment with cooperate with other government, nongovernment and international organizations; - To organize training models to prepare people in using computer technology; - To provide adapted programs for DeafThe integration of persons with disabilities into society is the one of the main priorities of the government. Internet and information technologies must be accessible for everyone including disabled persons. It will be possible to solve this problem in close cooperation with international organizations and exchanging the experiences from other countries.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/27/Access%20to%20the%20Internet%20for%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20and%20specific%20needs%20-%20GEORGIA.pdf) |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [Telecentre Foundation (Syria)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=28) | ​The main challenges are facing persons with disabilities in accessing ICT and using internet specifically in developing countries can be identified in lack of interest and ICT awareness, difficulty of access and high cost of ICT. Also lack of on-going support and training on ICT skills, ICT accessibility. In addition limited of complementary services, e.g. assistive technology, ICT accessibility tools and limited of accessibility features at mainstream ICT training facilities. In this sense, the above identified barriers can be seen as bottlenecks in the path towards ICT accessibility and accessing internet. There are different types of support structures available within countries but, must be focused upon combinations of one or more of the following to success the role of ICTs in development disabilities through attitude barriers in relation to understanding the benefits and possibilities of ICTs at policy and diffused responsibility for policy implementation. National, regional, and global Specialists are working groups to support networks and on – line networks. So we need to address the skills gap that currently prevents many people with disabilities from using ICT and accessing internet We need to implement ICT innovative approaches to training and preparing PWD for using ICT accessibility, Need for cooperation to develop IT skills program to help PWD develop their skills, increase productivity, gain ICT opportunities. IT/ICT skills training, there are few concrete programs that truly provide the opportunity for equal access to PWD. PWD are an untapped resource that can help close the growing deficit gap of skilled IT/ICT users. The governments can play vital role in addressing these challenges and gaps through collaboration of governments policy-makers, educators, NGOs and the manufacturing industry to help solve skills gap issues. Organize and promote ICT skills training and offer competitive compensation, flexible work programs and strong benefit programs to PWD. Support local community training programs, provide localized info on resources, funding and support to train PWD. UN should emphasizes on the need of standard on approach disability for all nations that ratified CRPD as Mandatory Resolution, also global effort concerted UN & Governments to set standard approach disability for action at national, regional, international level. Finally, I think we need to launch and promote strategy of“ Digital Literacy Campaign for Persons with Disabilities” specifically in in rural and disadvantaged communities in developing countries". The campaign aims to develop an effective strategy to enhance ICTs and IT skills among PWD. |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [PJSC Rostelecom (Russian Federation)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=29) | Please see the attachment information about PJSC Rostelecom project "Impelementation of the Cross-Russia project aimed at teaching senior citizens and disabled people computer literacy: the Alphabet of Internet”.-------------SUMMARYThe Alphabet of Internet project includes a computer literacy teaching program specially tailored and adapted to suit the needs of elderly people, teaching guidelines and presentations for each lesson. The Alphabet of Internet is designed both for learning in groups under a tutor’s supervision and for self-learning.The Project was developed by - PJSC Rostelecom, the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation supported by the Russian Ministry of Labor and Social Security.As of September 1, 2014 all the materials have been posted for public access on the project website (azbukainterneta.ru) specifically created for this purpose. A version designed for people with poor eyesight is also available on the portal. Any user is able to download the tutorial from the project website for his/her private usage. Some 15 thousand users visit the portal monthly.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/29/PJSC%20Rostelecom_Online%20Open%20Consultation.pdf) |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [MyRight (Sweden)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=31) | Input from member organizations of MyRight - Empowers People with Disabilities in attachment.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/31/Response%20to%20ITU.docx) |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=32) | Albania has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013. Access to internet for persons with disabilities in Albania has been treated in the framework of general access (including technology, physical environment, communication etc). As far as we know, there haven't been any study regarding the access to internet of persons with disabilities in Albania. While for many especially young users, internet is the only way to get in touch with the outside world from their houses (because of stigma, prejudice, physical barriers etc.), they have became regular users of internet. However, state institutions do not provide with accessible information, services are not offered online to ease the users, no training or programs aim at persons with disabilities to equip them with skills for using internet. No financial aid is provided to persons with disabilities who cannot move from their houses. The main challenges are faced for persons in rural areas, not being able to have access to internet. This due also to lack of financial means and lack of programs enabling persons with disabilities to use. There are no incentives for them to use internet. This also as a result of lack of accessible websites, very poor and scarce information in the official sites of public institutions. The role of government is crucial in terms of prioritizing programs which help persons with disabilities to have access to internet and parallel making use of e- government services. Inclusion in laws about accessibility of articles putting obligations on the state institutions and having respected those obligations are some steps which would address the gaps existing. |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [Radio Research & Development Institute (Russian Federation)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=33) | Please see the attachment information about examples of Russian initiatives related to subject of Open Consultations “Access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs”. One question was selected “Possible approaches and examples of good practices”. It’s a summary of few Russian initiatives (not all), which show our progress in supporting persons with disabilities and specific needs. We consider that this material can be useful for knowledge sharing and help all stakeholder to improve projects in this area.-----------------SUMMARY *(taken from the submitted document)** All projects for access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs are results of cooperation between civil organization, private business and state bodies.
* Projects for persons with disabilities and specific needs have some singularity:
* niche project distributed over whole country;
* require special tools & methods and special terminals, costs are high for this type of projects;
* availability of Internet service (by geographic area, especially in rural area).
* Strategic projects with long-term roadmap provide better results than discrete initiatives for support persons with disabilities and specific needs or persons with lack of ICT knowledge.
* Support from State is one of the key element in many cases for organization Internet access for persons with disabilities and education persons with lack of ICT knowledge.
* Cooperation between private business and state bodies makes possible implementation of such social projects.

[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/33/Access%20to%20the%20Internet%20for%20persons%20with%20disabilities%20and%20specific%20needs%20-%20Russian%20examples%20Feb%202016.pdf) |
| 1.
 | January 14, 2016 | [Federal Telecommunications Institute (Mexico)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=34) | The responses to the Open Consultation are in the attachment.--------------SUMMARYThe information and communication technologies, as the telecommunication and broadcasting services ought to be available for any person, without any kind of discrimination. Nevertheless, the persons with disabilities often find obstacles in access to telecommunications services, internet included, due to the lack of services with the necessary characteristics and infrastructure or because the price is still being little affordable. In order to address these obstacles, in Mexico, the Federal Telecommunications and Broadcasting Law established a chapter relating to the “Rights of Users with Disabilities”. In the mentioned Law, it was stipulated that the Federal Executive and the Federal Telecommunication Institute shall promote the equal opportunity access to telecommunications services for users with disabilities.Another effort that the Institute does to deal with the existent challenges to give access to the persons with disabilities, is the project that is being done on the “General Guidelines of Accessibility to Telecommunication Services for Persons with Disabilities”, which will have the goal of promoting the access of users with disabilities to telecommunication services, on equal conditions with the other users.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/34/Federal%20Telecommunications%20Institute%20-%20Response%20to%20Open%20Consultation.docx) |
|  | January 14, 2016 | [CONADI (Guatemala)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=35) | Hi, I'm José Antonio Estrada Franco, I work in The National Council for the Atention of the Disabilies Persons of Guatemala , thanks for your invitaton to participate in the online open consultation "Access to the Internet for Person With Disabilities and Specific Needs". By this way I share my comments on this important topic.--------------1. What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?

 The first challenge is to design web sites, many pages are created with elements and structure difficult to use by people with disabilities, an attractive design for most people has HD images, moving images, icons represent functions without assistance in the form of text, very small text, videos without subtitles and other items that are a barrier for people with disabilities have access to information.It is very important that the design of websites is created based on the structure of universal design to work within a strategy of inclusion accessible elements, such as the ability to change the contrast and color of text, help tags in images , ability to resize the object pointer coach for better control of people with disabilities.The second challenge is in the process of empowering people with disabilities, it is necessary hardware and software tools that make it easier for disabled people surf the Internet and teach them to use these tools are used.A third challenge is the economic resources in many countries development is very difficult to access special devices and software packages that help people with disabilities to access the information contained in the websites, this due its high cost in the import process.1. What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?

A good practice is to include in the subject areas aimed at web designers and developers the study of universal design so that they start to include from the base architecture of a web platform accessible elements and create an inclusive website that can be used by people with disabilities.Another good practice that can be implemented is to free tariffs on imported devices and software support for people with disabilities and promote social awareness in companies.1. What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?

You should take great importance in education the issue of disability is not focusing on the limitations and direct the main focus on the potential of people and teach them to develop their skills.1. What is the role of government in addressing these challenges and gaps?
2. Establish statistics on disability, which allow focusing programs and projects that contribute to the economic development of people with disabilities and their families.
3. Recognizing the importance of technical aids for people with disabilities and establish the necessary mechanisms to implement programs to equip people with disabilities of these tools.Strengthening institutions of disabilities in the State, and in such account, work on personal autonomy.

[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/35/online%20open%20consultation%20answers.docx) (English/Spanish) |
| 1.
 | January 15, 2016 | [Australian Communications Consumer Action Network](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=36) | Access to the internet for people with disability is impacted by a number of issues including affordability, digital literacy, availability of assistive technologies, availability of reliable broadband capacity and web accessibility. Many of these are common to many members of the community however the compounding barriers for people with disability exacerbate access difficulties for people with disability.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/36/Submission%20ITU%20CWG%20Internet%20Consultation%202016.docx) |
|  | January 15, 2016 | [Deaf Australia](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=37) | Access to caption and interpretation on website (WCAG 2.0 A, AA and AAA). Written submission.------------------**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *(taken from the submitted document)***For deaf and hard of hearing people, captioning is equal to the audio component. This is an aspiration and work must be done to realise that aspiration, as captioning is central to deaf and hard of hearing people’s access to media content– in the same way as sound is for non-deaf people. Despite the best intention of the providers, captions on websites are often an afterthought and deaf and hard of hearing individuals will have to contend with either substandard captions or no captions at all. For deaf and hard of hearing people, our capacity to gain information from wide ranging public resources is extremely limited and it is imperative that our capacity to access information is adequate and of high standard. Deaf and hard of hearing people, at times, are forced to make complaints through Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth, 1991) for providers to caption their content. However these complaints often are dismissed because of existing processes adopted by the governmental and non-governmental organisations and their adoption/ compliance to WCAG 2.0. In addition to the Act, the providers may be exempted from providing accessible services if they can demonstrate financial hardship, which means that information will be not accessible for deaf and hard of hearing people. Australian Government created a ‘whole-of-government’ agency– Digital Transformation Office ([www.dto.gov.au](http://www.dto.gov.au)) that is responsible for whole-government web advice and its accessibility. Access to information is not an unreasonable accommodation and providers need an explicitly clear direction and standard in best practice in delivery of website accessibility.For purpose of this submission, we will focus on specific references from WCAG 2.0.1.2.2 (A) Captions are provided for all pre-recorded audio content in synchronised media, except when the media is a media alternative for text and is clearly labelled as such.1.2.4 (AA) Captions are provided for all live audio content in synchronised media.1.2.6 (AAA) Sign language interpretation is provided for all pre-recorded audio content in synchronised media. Reference: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/> (accessed– 5 January 2016) [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/37/ITU%20-%20Deaf%20Australia%20-%20January%202016.pdf) |
|  | January 15, 2016 | [Office of Electronic Communications (Poland)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=38) | SUMMARY**Position of the Office of Electronic Communications (UKE, Poland)****for ITU consultation on Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needs**Disabled persons or persons with specific needs should be able to use the Internet under the terms and conditions equal to those enjoyed by the majority of end users. Major barriers that they may face in using the Internet include equipment and technical arrangements, unavailability of some pieces of information on the Internet, lack of Internet skills, as well as insufficient funding of the Internet access for this group of end users. State authorities in Poland have undertaken actions to address the challenge arising from the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities and special needs, e.g. the ordinance of the Minister of Administration and Digitization on specific requirements for the provision of amenities for disabled people by providers of publicly available telephone services or the certification programme of the President of UKE, especially the ’Disabled Friendly’ and ’Safe Internet’ categories. All providers of publicly available telephone services are obliged – where technically possible – to provide a relatively large number of amenities in the field of customer service, provision of information, public telephones, and connected with the conclusion and performance of a contract. In addition, the ‘Disabled Friendly’ certificate awarded by the President of UKE is aimed at increasing the participation of the people with disabilities in the telecommunications services market. The key role of the state authorities in providing access to the Internet for the persons with disabilities and special needs consists in taking different types of actions aimed at levelling the access enjoyed by most end users. This includes, i.a., stimulating the demand for such services by encouraging entrepreneurs to render devices designed for the aforementioned social groups or implementing special certification programmes. Moreover, it is essential that the needs of the persons with disabilities and specific needs were subject to periodic analysis in terms of actual barriers faced by those consumers. [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/38/Office%20of%20Electronic%20Communications%20%28Poland%29.doc)  |
|  | January 15, 2016 | [MyRight Nepal](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=39) | **What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?** * Internet are not affordable (poor condition), not available (power issues), and accessible (for example to blinds, low vision) and also language issues (English is mainly used however cannot be read by all ). Also not having such documents in sign language and pictorial form. This also includes not availability of computer or electronic devices along side of internet use skills. Even if the internet is there, not all the resources or targeted resources are available.
* Not having sufficient word signs in Sign Language

**What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?*** Not much, however few, for example MVDA software that converts text to voice, and another Netrabani a kinds of Nepali software that speaks the 'input' in the mobile or other electronic devices. In the India conference, it was presented that, for example, pictorial reading materials are prepared and uploaded in the internet, and children with ID and Autism can follow those materials and use for their study. In few countries, they have adopted sign to text-voice and vice versa software for the use of deaf persons.

**What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?** * Not having government's priority not there is ample lobby and advocacy from the DPOs as well.

**What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?** * Government need to adopt/import International softwares and emerging technologies and domesticate into its own language.
* Need to make its all websites accessible to people with disabilities.
* Need to define this as one of the priority area. Particularly in education, internet based education system would contribute a lot to educate people with disabilities.
* Need to have ICT based teaching, for example people with disabilities can download and use books, reference materials etc. (Blind can listen and deaf can see the signs)
* Government also need to invest to develop new technologies and softwares.
* Training to people with disabilities on ICT skills alongside of methods and materials.
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|  | January 15, 2016 | [Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=40) | In Rwanda, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector is singled out as a priority that can change dramatically the society. ICT can contribute towards creating employment and generating incomes, including disadvantaged communities, notably among women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The government is thus undertaking several initiatives for ICT to be accessible and making significant improvements in the lives of these persons, allowing them to enhance their social and economic integration in communities by enlarging the scope of activities available to them. The Governments have the following general obligations towards the access to Internet for Persons with Disability and Specific Needs: 1.1. To establish the institution framework with the authority and enthusiasm to drive the advocacy and an accessibility agenda for persons with disabilities. 1.2. Formulating a government information technology policy, strategy and regulatory framework to include people with disabilities. This plan should be formulated to include all types of information, not just web-based. It should show great understanding of the concept of including everyone in the digital economy. 1.3. Government and business use of ICT procurement to encourage inclusive design. Where solutions are developed out of house or purchased off the shelf, it is important to consider accessibility as early as possible in the procurement process. 1.4. Effective training programs on e-inclusion for governments, the private sector and civil society. 1.5. The government and the Universal Access Funds can be used effectively to support all underserved people, including those with disabilities and establish special tele-centres for people with disabilities and specific needs and support the association of people with disabilities to acquire appropriate equipment. 1.6. To implement and enforce the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) that are part of a series of Web accessibility guidelines published by the Web accessibility Initiatives (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organization for the World Wide Web. 1.7. To avail assistive technology software such as screen readers, screen magnifiers and onscreen keyboards as either proprietary or open source products. 1.8. Instructions on building government Web sites that are accessible to the largest number of people possible -- disabled or not. 1.9. To avail ICT equipments, applications and assistive technology that can meet the special needs of persons with disabilities and specific needs. Governments, Civil Society Organizations and Persons with Disabilities and special needs’ organizations should combine efforts to address the challenges, fill the gaps and implement the inclusive ICT policies and strategies. Rwanda recognizes that the Internet is growing at a rate higher than anyone could have predicted. If people with disabilities worldwide estimated at 15% by World health Survey are not included in the burgeoning world digital economy, they will be left further behind than they are now. The loss of these opportunities will make a difficult existence even worse and prevent many from being productive members of society. The details are included in the main document herewith attached for further reference.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/40/CONTRIBUTION%20TO%20CWG%20-INTERNET%20FEB%202016.doc) |
|  | January 15, 2016 | [Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=41) | **Contribution:Question 1: Challenges What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?** Lack of awareness of PWDs of the importance of using the Internet, Illiteracy and e-illiteracy, problems regarding availability of accessibility hardware, and affordability. Website accessibility is another problem facing PwDs. Lack of online applications. **Question 2: What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?** 1. Egyptian Ministry of Communication & Information Technology has launched an accessible website, using the expertise of software developers and the feedback of people with different disabilities (hearing, visual). This accessible website provided all information regarding services and initiatives provided by the MCIT for people with disabilities. 2. Ministry of Communication & Information Technology is holding an annual competition between software developers to best software solutions for helping and enabling PwDs. 3. Some mobile operators are providing special tariffs for PwDs to encourage them to use Internet. **Question 3: What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?** Gaps in addressing the challenges: lack of regulations to enforce accessibility of websites, enforcement of special tariffs to PwDs.*How to fill the gaps:* Training and capacity building skill set, Public awareness campaigns to use Internet. **Question 4: What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?** Government can play many roles in addressing such challenges. *Enforcer:* put new regulations in place to provide preferential treatment to people with disabilities. *Enabler:* Provide an entrepreneur-friendly environment for entrepreneurs who provide Internet access solutions to people with disabilities. *Supporter:* Provide financial support to developers and/or users who are PwDs.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/41/consultation.docx) |
|  | January 15, 2016 | [Information and Communication Technologies Authority (Turkey)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=42)  | **ICTA’s Submission to “CWG-Internet: Online Open Consultation (October 2015-January 2016)”**Today, accessing information and communication technologies (ICT) services have been an indispensable need. ICTs provide very important facilities and these facilities must be equally accessible for persons with disabilities so that disabled persons can live a more independent life and fully benefit from their rights. In the preamble of the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” it is stated that “Disability is an evolving concept, and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” According to this approach, environmental actors have significant impact on the presence or extend of disability. Therefore, in order to eliminate the barriers, the factors that cause disability need to be addressed and the necessary actions need to be taken.The factors that persons with disabilities may face when using ICT services can be named, inter alia; the high prices of accessible devices or software, lack of availability or variety of accessible services in the areas that have low profitability, difficulties faced during subscribing processes or other processes regarding the subscription, literacy rate, educational status, other demographics of the disabled persons, inaccessible websites and lack of public awareness.The governments should take the necessary measures to eliminate the barriers mentioned above. Funding mechanisms can be created in order to ensure that the disabled persons benefit from ICT services in equal basis. These funds can be used in the purpose of promoting availability and choice of accessible services.To ensure the availability of accessible devices in the ICT sector, it is important that the policy makers/regulators lead and encourage adopting and use of the universal design principles. Additionally, taking into account of the accessibility features in the public procurement processes can have benefits in several aspects. Procurement of the accessible ICTs can create an accessible ICTs market. Thanks to the economies of scale and expected increase of R&D activities in this area, it is possible to reduce the costs of the accessible ICTs.In order to facilitate the subscription-related processes for disabled persons, provision of customer care services in alternative ways for convenience of disabled persons and increasing the accessibility of the existing customer care services are very important. The literacy rate, educational status and other demographics of the disabled persons need to be considered in evaluating the measures for disabled persons. Otherwise -for example- a text based solution recommended for the speech/hearing disabled persons can be ineffective due to the low literacy rate among persons with speech/hearing disability.Enhancing the use of internet for disabled persons, accessibility of web sites is very important factor. The governments can take some measures to ensure the availability of web accessibility for public services and widen the scope to the private companies that provides publicly available services. It is also important that the information related to accessible products/services designed specifically for the persons with disabilities is accessible as well. The statistical information regarding persons with disabilities can be shared as an “open data”. Therefore, the private companies and other sector players can have precise information on this area and can offer well-targeted services and products for the benefit of disabled persons.For the purpose of raising awareness on accessibility, it is important that accessibility issue can be considered as a part of educational system such as including the accessibility in the curricula and training courses.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/42/Turkey-ICTA-CWG-Internet%20Online%20Open%20Consultation%20%28October%202015-%20January%202016%29.pdf) |
|  | January 18, 2016  | [Ministry of Digital Affairs of Poland](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=43) | **CWG-Internet: Online Open Consultation concerning*Access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs*** **Regulations**In April 2012 Polish government issued an order on National Interoperability framework, minimal requirements for public registers and information exchange in the electronic form, and minimal requirements for IT systems. These act imposes on entities fulfilling public tasks that their IT systems for presenting information comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) with regard to the AA level criteria. According to the regulation, since 30 May 2012 all newly created public administration IT systems must be constructed in accordance with the WCAG 2.0 guidelines. All public administration websites (regardless the date of their creation) must be accessible for the disabled since the end of May 2014.**Challenges and actions**One of the biggest challenges that we need to face when dealing with accessibility issues is the lack of awareness of what accessibility really means and why it is so important. What we all need to understand is that accessibility is a process and it cannot be provided once and for all. The fact that a website is accessible today does not mean that it will be so also tomorrow.That is why Ministry of Digital Affairs conducts various of activities in order to raise awareness and knowledge on the accessibility of digital resources. These activities are aimed at web developers, administrators, content editors and carried out in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The role of the Ministry in this process is to facilitate and support the implementation of web accessibility guidelines by the public sector. It is a challenge especially for local government units that are struggling with financial problems and very often cannot afford to hire experts. That is why the Ministry announced a competition in which local governments can obtain financial support in order to fulfill WCAG. 2.0The Ministry of Digital Affairs conducts also other open bid tenders aimed at non-governmental sector in which NGOs can gain financial support for their actions regarding raising awareness on accessibility. Among the project co-financed by the Ministry are: development of e-learning platforms and courses, development of free web templates with content management systems, organization of workshops for developers and administrators of websites.Furthermore, the Ministry is one of the founders of Broad Alliance on Digital Skills. Among its members are both private and public sector institutions and NGOs. In the framework of the Alliance operates the e-Accessibility group - its aim is to identify best practices in the field of promotion and application of accessibility. The group organizes workshops , seminars and prepares recommendation on digital inclusion.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/43/2016%2001%2018%20Ministry%20of%20Digital%20Affairs%20of%20Rep.%20of%20Poland.doc) |
|  | January 18, 2016 | [Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of Bulgaria](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=44) | Accessibility is a human right. It should also be noted that in Articles 20, 21 and 26, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, an integral part of the Lisbon Treaty, prohibits any form of discrimination on account of disability and recognises the right of persons with a disability to benefit from specific measures; for its part, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities commits member states to take adequate measures to ensure access for people with disabilities, on an equal basis, to information and communications technologies, including the internet.-------------SUMMARYBulgarian government has taken steps towards the implementation of appropriate measures to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the digital society and enjoy equal conditions in relation to new technologies. The government is aiming to eliminate all barriers (psychological, educational, social, cultural, professional, financial and architectural) for the social inclusion and equal integration of people with disabilities.The Bulgarian government, and more specifically the Ministry of Education, is taking serious steps towards developing a more inclusive education. In accordance with the Law on Integration of People with Disabilities, the Ministry of Education and Science provides a supportive environment for the integrated education of children with special educational needs. Children with disabilities are guaranteed a seat in state kindergarten and school. Special attention is being paid to vocational education and training and the inclusion of ICT in them. Accessible ICTs are thus vital for allowing people with disabilities to compete under equal conditions in a growing digital market and be part of the digital society. All schools in the country have internet access, but further serious funding is necessary for upgrading the facilities, training of teachers, converting the educational materials to a digital format and more. The government is also working on increasing the digital literacy, e-skills and digital inclusion of people with disabilities at the post-secondary education stage. At the national level, efforts are being made:• to provide official information to people with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies that acknowledge the needs arising from different impairments (for example Braille, audio cassettes and easy-to-read versions);• to organize training and other actions aimed at encouraging the use of information and communication technologies by people with disabilities;• to ensure the accessibility of e-learning materials for people with disabilities through compliance with existing accessibility standards;• to take into account the fact that people with disabilities can use sign languages, Braille, and alternative means and modes of communication (including advocacy services), and to apply them in official interactions whenever possible. A person that summarizes the content should be available during meetings and conferences when requested;• to make communication systems more accessible for people with disabilities through the use of new technologies such as text communication;• to ensure that authorities and other public bodies make their information and communications accessible to people with disabilities, including their websites, which must comply with the current international accessibility guidelines;• to encourage all private bodies, particularly those that receive public funding, to make its Information and communication channels accessible for persons with disabilities;• to encourages the development, production and distribution of affordable assistive information and communication aids;• to encourage compliance with universal design principles when it comes to all new information and communication technology;• to implement Resolution ResAP (2001) 3 "Towards full citizenship of people with disabilities through inclusive new technologies".[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/44/Access%20to%20Internet%20for%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20and%20Specific%20Needs_BG.docx) |
|  | January 20, 2016  | [Atos (United Kingdom)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=45) | Following established guidelines such as WCAG 2.0 is important. Normally people aim to meet level AA this means that many of the major issues of interoperability with assistive technology are removed. I would urge policy makers to examine the practicality of also looking to implement some of the AAA criteria as these are particularly beneficial for people with cognitive accessibility needs. Please also look at the work of the W3C cognitive accessibility taskforce to get more information on how we can better make the internet a place that welcomes people with the widest possible range of needs not just the obvious disabilities that have established ways and means of delivering access. https://www.w3.org/TR/coga-user-research/ PS the irony of using a Captcha on this form enquiring about accessibility is exquisite |
|  | January 20, 2016 | [Estrategia Digital Nacional (Mexico)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=46) | Please find attached comments by the National Digital Strategy (Estrategia Digital Nacional) of Mexico----------------SUMMARY**Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and Specific Needs**Mexico identifies development and proper use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), especially Internet, as powerful tools for promoting Human Rights. The National Digital Strategy (EDN, for its acronym in Spanish) works towards guarantee access to information and the implementation of an accessibility digital communication model based on international standards.Mexico believes that in the process to make Internet available for all, it is required to have a better understanding of the needs of the disabled persons; identify and implement incentives to ICT developers and the private sector; develop programs that promote opportunities for persons with disabilities through ICTs.; strengthen the collaboration with private, social sectors and academic and technical community and create accessible technology according to each type of disability. In this context, efforts must focus to expand coverage and connectivity of telecommunication services, including Internet, technological devices; more and better local contents for all users; government information to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities; collaboration with the private and social sectors in terms of accessibility and integration of people with disabilities.Mexico has the view that the Federal Government has an important role as a detonator of actions that can achieve significant impacts on the lives of people, through digitalization and accessibility through ICTs. Among good practices, Mexico has implemented **“**Mexico Connected” aimed to bring ICT access to public centers across the country and “GOB.MX”, the National Unique Window (#VUN), increasingly easier, friendly and accessible information to persons with disabilities). Cooperation with the National Academy and the social and private sectors has been helpful to create local contents and links with the industry are developed to induce approaches favoring accessibility for their users or customers.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/46/Contribution%20National%20Digital%20Strategy.docx) |
|  | January 25, 2016 | [United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (India)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=47) | Inclusive Development provides a mechanism and platform for full employment and participation. Thus benefitting the marginalized sections of society and enabling maximum utilization of the ICT devices and applications.------------------1. What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?Persons with disabilities first of all come under the purview of unemployment or limited access to employment. Due to this reason, they are furnished with limited financial resources and assets. When there is less or no financial capabilities, possessing mobile handsets/ ICT applications which enable their productivity at work-places is a far dream. With no finances, acquiring higher education is also a challenge. Hence gaining knowledge in ICT skill sets would also be a challenge. This would further hinder their progress in gaining access to their specific needs in usage of the Internet and ICT applications etc2. What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges? Barriers to employment for Persons with Disabilities must be eliminated. Providing productive jobs with access to ICT devices and applications leads to enhanced awareness and also increased quest for knowledge. Enhanced knowledge and skill –based employment generates higher financial assets. Thus providing a platform for access to the ICT infrastructure and the Internet.3. What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled? Maximizing the ICT penetration index in all countries to provide the ICT devices and infrastructure to the marginalized sections of society is a vital step. Also equipping these devices to persons located in remote locations – rural areas in a country is important. Increasing availability of the ICT devices and enhancing awareness for usage of these devices among the Specially –abled persons’ community would further increase employment and lead to Inclusive and Full Participation of the society at large. Thus progressing the socio –economic value of society!4. What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?The government would ideally perform the functions of enhancing the affordability and availability of the ICT devices in order to maximize its reach to the poor and specially –abled marginalized sections of society. Creating platforms for awareness and skill building programmes and vocational training to cater to the ICT skill sets and Internet skills would be an asset to the contribution from the governments– Benefitting the persons with Disabilities and eradicating poverty and providing Full Employment. [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/47/ITU%20Council%20Dialogue.pdf) |
|  | January 25, 2016 | [Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Oman)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=48) | ***Access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs***1) What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?a. Lack of ICT skills might be mostly caused by the lack of supportive technology such as equipment, handsets, readers which are used by those with special needs. For example a specific device used by the blind (Braille Sense) is very expensive in our region, in addition to that the number of suppliers of these equipment is not very large. b. Another factor which effect the ICT skills is the availability of Arabic content, people with disability do not have the equipment (hardware or software) or translators (i.e. sign language or language translators to Arabic) and many essential applications required to make telecom services and the internet more accessible to them available in Arabic. The accessibility equipment is not in Arabic and there is a lack of websites that are accessible to people with special needs.1. What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?

We would suggest the following examples for each category:Availability of accessible websites• They have captioning on images• The websites have magnifier facilities• Interactive and easy to browse and do not depend on animations etc. which make it difficult for blind to view• Formats which support readers from text to voiceDevices• Accessibility features are available• Reasonably priced devices who provide equipment in Arabic• Telecom providers could support and supply the devices along with bundled plans at a reasonable price• Service providers could provide their subscribers with a list of accessible devices which are readily available for their use such as the apple iphone, nokia, blackberry etc and have the accessibility features. They can also distribute them for free like some operators do with their special needs subscribers as support as long as they commit with them for a specific period.SoftwareEncourage development of software and applications which assist people with special needs and fund the development until the launch.A body could be in charge of such an initiative i.e. Mada Centre in Qatar who translate and develop software Telecom Services• Emergency services which are accessible to people with special needs: Bahrain has a national call center which provides telecom services using relay technology and has instant sign language translators.• Reasonably priced tariffs and plans to the essential or basic telecom services3) What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?Enforceability: There is no one specialized body that is involved with special needs issues, all that is available is individual initiatives by different government bodies and private sector.Funding: Nobody is willing to invest a lot in this segment as they are low profit segment.4) What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?Monitor and Enforce compliance and encourage initiatives to support the development for this segment.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/48/Access%20to%20the%20Internet%20for%20persons%20with%20disabilities%20and%20specific%20needs.docx) |
|  | January 25, 2016 | [World Health Organization (Switzerland)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=49) | This is not a personal but WHO's contribution. Please see attachment.------------SUMMARYDespite all efforts by governments and other major stakeholders to ensure access to the Web by persons with disabilities, there are still some challenges to be addressed. The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) works to ensure the right to access to communications technology is preserved for persons with disabilities on the Web and has produced several international standards designed to improve the accessibility of content on the Web and applications involved in its design and use. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 is one of the WAI’s most successful standards and has even gained approval from the International Organization for Standardization. Moreover, many countries have seen merit in instituting compliance to the WCAG as a requirement for government and in some cases non-governmental websites as well. However, this contribution identifies some of the persisting challenges hampering access to the Web including a lack of Web skills and informed use among persons with disabilities, and adequate accommodation for them on the Web that should be addressed.Promising approaches adopted by the WAI and researchers in the field to improve access to the Web by persons with disabilities were critically reviewed to highlight good practice and areas for improvement. The WAI's consensus based guideline development process has great merit as well as the relatively prompt, responsive and evidence-based guidance provided by research-based approaches (e.g., Beyond ALT Text: Usability for Disabled Users’ guidelines). Nonetheless, efforts to encourage more participation by persons with disabilities during the guideline development process and more systematic Web accessibility related research are needed.This contribution directs governments to adopt the pragmatic framework of progressive realisation by assessing their current state of affairs and devising meaningful and feasible steps towards the goal of making the Web accessible for all. Developed strategies are to incorporate several key elements including efforts to: strengthen links between key stakeholders (e.g., government, Web accessibility professionals and researchers, and those with disabilities); ensure increased compliance to standards (e.g, WAI guidelines); fund research to accommodate a wider range of disabilities, such as those experienced by people with mental disorders; and to empower persons with disabilities.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/49/Response_CWG-Internet_Online%20Open%20Consultation_Final.pdf) |
|  | January 27, 2016 | [Support Center for Students with Disabilities of the University of Colombo, Council for the Blind, Daisy Lanka Foundation (Sri Lanka)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=51) | 1. There are number of factors that could be pointed as challenges in accessing internet by persons with disabilities in Sri Lanka. Most of the persons with disabilities do not possess adequate knowledge of using assistive/adaptive technologies. High cost of the alternative technologies such as screen readers and screen magnifiers, lack of resources that can used with their local languages, poverty are some of the Causes that has led to this situation. In addition to these, developers generally do not adhere to the guidelines and standards that has put forward to make web contents accessible to all, and the ultimate result is inaccessible websites.2. Through various local disability campaigns and international initiatives access to internet is being facilitated in various means. W3 standard has been introduced to developers to make websites accessible to all including persons disabilities. Today, most of the websites, Email services, social media such as face book, online libraries, internet banking and internet shopping can be utilized by persons with disabilities with alternative accessible technologies.3. Sri Lanka is yet to design an accessibility guideline for websites and web contents. In absence of the relevant accessibility provisions at law, prevailing challenges are difficult to overcome. In addition to that, an effective mechanism should be in place to implement/enforce those guideline, standards and policies.4.The Government should encourage the persons with disabilities to use internet in their day to day activities simply because it is easier for them rather than accessing the physical buildings/entities. Some of the things that a Government can do to encourage the persons with disabilities includes, provision of easy internet packages, implementing strict accessibility policy, special schemes to subsidies assistive devices, speedy ratification to the international treaties/conventions that in place to enhance the living condition of the disabled people.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/51/Accessible_Form_CWG-Internet%20Open%20Consultations%20%28ASOKA%20BANDULA%20-Lecturer%20U%20O%20CBO%2C%20CB.%20DLF%20Sri%20Lanka%20%29.docx) |
|  | January 27, 2016 | [G3ict - the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (United States)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=52) | G3ict is particularly interested in the final question and possible government actions. We are submitting a document describing two specific steps that governments can take to improve access to the Internet for persons with disabilities. 1. Ensure that public sector websites are accessible. 2. Help to define and make broadly known the business case for a commitment to web accessibility.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/52/G3ict%20ITU%20Internet%20Contribution.docx) |
|  | January 28, 2016 | [National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) (Sudan)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=53) | Kindly we needs you fruitful help and support to implement good ways for disability people and needs.**-------------****Question 1: ChallengesWhat are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?** Answer to question 1: [Response to ITU consultation about access to the Internet for persons with disabilities and specific needs, I appreciate to give the Main General situation in Sudan:1. Income per capita in Sudan is v. low.2. No specific legislation and regulation to ensure the right of disabled persons to access ICT’s,.3. Lack of assistive technologies (cost +training + support).4. Lack of awareness (Persons with disabilities lack awareness of what ICTs can do to facilitate their socioeconomic5. Lack of policy implementation and/or lack of effective implementation mechanisms.**Question 2: Best practicesWhat possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?** Answer to question 2: [NONE] **Question 3: GapsWhat are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?** Answer to question 3: [NONE] **Question 4: Role of governmentsWhat is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?**Answer to question 4: [Establishment of Commission Committee regarding disability Issues. 2. Implementing legislation and regulation. 3. Encouraging service provider to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.][View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/53/Accessible_Form_CWG-Internet%20Open%20Consultations.docx) |
|  | January 28, 2016 | [PURA (The Gambia)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=54) | Please find attached of my responses regards to this consultation .I did really find a very interest and need to address the issued globally. We love to share with other participants to hear the view and concerns.-----------------**Question 1: Challenges****What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and using the Internet?** Answer to question 1: [We live in a world today where internet access is very necessary and important in our daily life for attaining jobs, increasing innovation and globally competitive and making life so easy of us which should be for everyone. As internet itself describe is for everyone, despite the fact that is not own by anyone there still a hug gap with the persons with disabilities with their different level of disabilities facing challenges to access the internet. Such as eyesight deficiencies the lack of compatibility of Web content, application or software that allow the computer to produced voice output that appears on the screen make it impossible for them to access the net. For people with hearing losses facing the challenges to hear video/Audio contents lacking textual equivalents made it impossible them to physically use the internet interactively by using social medias with video chats, calls, audios or even conference calls and many more. Likewise the speech and communication disabilities will also be cut out from the interactive web chats and others. Generally people with disabilities face different challenges depending on their nature of disabilities which exclude them from making good use of the advancement of technology specially the African] **Question 2: Best practices****What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?** Answer to question 2: [Accessibility of the internet for people with disabilities should be a priority. Individual, stakeholder and public and private sectors should take responsibilities to increase awareness and participation of them and make affordable. empowering and capacitation in the form of self-confident boosting for people with disabilities to realize that they can do anything a person who is not disable can do. Give them the necessary support to close the gap address the issue.] **Question 3: Gaps****What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled?** Answer to question 3: [Internet should affordable for them to able to access by minimizing the cost of internet and ICT equipment’s and using different mechanism to address the gaps through education. For the Society they should stop treating people with disability with extreme sympathy, rather they should be treated like just normal. This will help minimize the number of people with disability who result to street begging because they see it as the only alternative.] **Question 4: Role of governments****What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps?**Answer to question 4: [The governments should be investing on providing skills and capacity building program in the form of specialized ICT centers for disable people at an affordable cost where they can be trained on ICT related fields for a career path. Encourage initiative idea that will involve them and ready to finance any possible means. The Government should implement policies that will protect and allow disable people to have equal rights and encourage the high use of technology for them. They should invest on ICT equipment’s and support the by all means.] [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/54/Accessible_Form_CWG-Internet%20Open%20Consultations%20%281%29.docx) |
|  | January 29, 2016 | [Microsoft (United States)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=56) | Microsoft supports G3ict’s contribution to this consultation encouraging governments to (1) do more to ensure that public sector websites are accessible and to (2) define and make broadly known the business case for a commitment to web accessibility. We also draw attention to the collaborative report entitled “The ICT Opportunity for a Disability-Inclusive Development Framework” available at http://www.itu.int/en/action/accessibility/Documents/The%20ICT%20Opportunity%20for%20a%20Disability\_Inclusive%20Development%20Framework.pdf. Accessible government websites enable people of all ages and abilities to stay informed, participate fully as citizens, and seek public-sector employment more easily. While many governments have taken steps to promote accessibility in public-sector websites, implementation has been sporadic. As countries increasingly implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), industry is working to support broader and more effective implementation efforts. Today, the widely endorsed international standard ISO/IEC 40500:2012 is making it easier for governments to improve the accessibility of their websites by aligning their policies with ISO/IEC 40500:2012 and instituting self-assessment and conformance practices. To assist governments, Microsoft has supported collaboration between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and G3ict to create a model web accessibility policy for use by governments around the world. We and our partners continue to provide web accessibility policy guidance directly to governments and we collaborate with disability NGOs around the world to raise awareness of the benefits of making the Web more accessible. We are working closely with G3ict and Disabled People’s International to provide training to NGOs on web accessibility, and our tools, Microsoft SharePoint and Visual Studio, help developers create more accessible websites and meet current U.S. and international accessibility standards. Microsoft encourages the ITU and member states to join industry in supporting government web accessibility outreach programs for users, developers, and content authors.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/56/Building-Accessible-Government-Websites.PDF) |
|  | January 29, 2016 | [Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=57) | The response was sourced from the Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA), Malawi Council for the Handicapped, (MACOHA) and Department of Persons with Disabilities What are the different challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs (e.g. lack of ICT skill sets etc.) in accessing and PWD because of lack of assist using the Internet? People of differing abilities face diverse challenges in accessing the Internet. The same Web site can offer opportunities for one group and excludes another. For example, regarding Web-based distance education, it has opened opportunities for persons with physical disabilities to take courses online, but if such persons also have weak or limited function of hands and fingers, their participation in the course may be limited or impossible. Similarly, a Web-enabled mobile device with a touch screen is wonderful to a user with a hearing impairment and yet horrendous to a user with a visual impairment, if it is not designed to provide alternative methods for interactions. The major challenges for Malawi can be summed up in the following broad areas: (i) Persons with visual impairments face challenges in the lack of compatibility of Web content with screen readers. These are software applications that provide computer-synthesized speech output of what appears on the screen, as well as equivalent text provided in the back-end code. (ii) Screen-reader users have problems when there are no appropriate text tags on graphics, links, forms, or tables. (iii) Cluttered layout, buttons and links that are too small, create barriers for Persons with motor impairments, such as limited or no use of fingers or hands. Other navigability considerations (such as requiring the use of a pointing device) can render entire sites and functions unusable. (iv) The lack of textual equivalents of audio content can cut off large portions of the content of a site, and interactive Web chats and other conferencing features may be impossible for persons with hearing impairments. (v) People with speech and communication impairments can also be excluded from interactive Web chats and other conferencing features. (vi) Persons with cognitive impairments, such as autism, dementia, or traumatic brain injury, are affected by issues of design, layout, and navigability. (vii) People with specific learning disabilities, depending on their nature, may face the same barriers as people with visual impairments or people with cognitive impairments. (viii) The rates of flickering and flash can jeopardize the health of people with seizure disorders, such as epilepsy. (ix) Lack of Assistive Technologies and software (Jaws and Dolphin Pen Software) to support PWD in computer labs, internet cafes, telecentres. Further, high cost of the software /license (Jaws and Dolphin Pen) that can read aloud words on the internet for persons with difficulties in seeing (x) Some people with difficulties in hearing would need an interpreter to inform them of the new technologies, without which, they may not be able to have access to new ICT materials (xi) As technology becomes more and more advanced, PWD are not considered in the design of the new technologies and generally, people feel that PWD cannot use the internet. (xii) Generally the general public has a conception that PWD cannot use ICTs and as such, it is observed that PWD cannot manage to get into the internet cafes, telecentres and some of the institutions. People with difficulties in moving cannot get into these public place. Some organizations also need to be made aware that even persons with disabilities are capable of accessing ICT services, as DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY. What possible approaches and examples of good practices are available to address these challenges?In the absence of policy or a body that monitors procurement and use of disability friendly Web and Internet technologies, it is difficult to talk about good-practice in Malawi. However, some of the possible approaches in Malawi include: (i) Malawi has the Disability Act that promotes the rights of PWD but it also allows them to take an active part in the society in Malawi. however, PWD have not actively participated in issues related to internet access because of the challenges highlighted. (ii) The ICT legislation in Malawi gives mandate to the ICT regulator to ensure universal access: this means that the regulator should ensure that provision of ICT services is all inclusive. The regulator need to put up a regulatory framework that should address the access gap for PWD. (iii) Malawi has some institutions like Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA), Federation for Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) etc. These organizations have been established in to enhance the welfare of all PWD and enable them to assume their rightful role in society: these institutions can be instrumental in address the access gap if several stakeholders can work in cooperate with these institutions to address the access gap for PWD, What are the gaps in addressing these challenges and how can these gaps be filled? The gaps in addressing challenges listed above include, but are not limited to the following: (i) A lack of- or inadequate policy in the area and perhaps government’s lack of prioritization in the face of other competing needs. (ii) The absence of a body or department tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the procurement and distribution of disability friendly Web and Internet technologies and facilities. (iii) Generalized poverty, which includes high cost of both equipment and internet. The majority of government primary and secondary schools do not offer computer literacy, let alone internet access. (iv) High illiteracy levels (v) Inadequate public internet facilities. Lack of- or limited access to electricity plus internet in urban townships and rural areas. (vi) Lack of skills across the board, meaning that the ordinary Malawian, let alone those with disabilities do not have technical, software and Website proficiency. The possible mechanisms to address these gaps include: (i) Government deliberate policies to address such gaps would be very instrumental in addressing such gaps (ii) The ICT Regulatory should review its regulatory framework so that it is all inclusive and should create a conducive environment for ensuring PWD are not discriminated. (iii) The disability sector should be involved at the planning and design level of organizational ICT infrastructure so that some of the challenges can be tackled at planning stage. (iv) Set up a fund that should subsidize the purchase of assistive technologies to ensure assistive technologies are available and accessed b PWD in the public internet access centers, PWD training centers and Internet Cafe's. What is the role of governments in addressing these challenges and gaps? The government's role in this is to put up a Legislation that supports connectivity for PWD. The existing legal and regulatory framework on ICT should be strengthened so that they should protect the rights of PWD with respect to access of internet. The government, in collaboration with FEDOMA and other disability organizations should spearhead the development of policy and guidelines for the area under investigation. |
|  | January 29, 2016 | [Communications Consumer Panel (United Kingdom)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=58) | Summary All consumers should be able to benefit from the opportunities and enjoyment that communications services can bring; The internet can make life easier and reduce costs –people with disabilities, people who are older, or on lower incomes should be assisted to go online and continue to build confidence and skills to use the internet; Governments need to ensure a clearer and more comprehensive policy on take-up and use of, as well as access to the internet; Where people chose not to go online - or while they are still unable to do so confidently - they should not be penalised for using offline equivalent services; Companies should design websites, products and services that enable users with specific needs to benefit from them and should involve users in testing, also taking into account W3C web accessibility guidelines; Examples of good practice are easy to find and should be replicated by others, with funding from governments where relevant.[See submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/58/ITU%20Disabled%20Persons%20Access%20to%20the%20Internet%20January%202016%20FINAL.pdf) |
|  | January 29, 2016 | [World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=59) | As it is an imperative to work WITH and not just to work FOR persons with disabilities, World Federation of the Deaf has decided to participate at the open meeting in Geneva. Other organizations are also encouraged to bring persons with disabilities to this meeting. Attached is a short draft of what we would like to present at the meeting in order to make participants aware of the problems and the vision of persons with an invisible disability: deafness.----------------**Access to the Internet for the Deaf** Draft Contribution for 2nd Physical Open Consultation of CWG InternetAt ITU Headquarter, Geneva on Februrary 15, 2016Impact of DeafnessDeafness is an invisible disability with serious consequences for inclusion in todays society.There are about 70 millions of deaf persons of which roughly 80 % live in developing countries.Sign language is a natural language for deaf persons and a fully acknowledge language of its own.For deaf persons, a bilingual education with sign language and the local national language must be a standard. However, more than 80 % of deaf children are not getting any education.Sign language interpreting is the bridge to inclusion in the hearing society.UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPDThe UN CRPD confirms the right of deaf people to participate in society, government and other areas of live as equal citiziens. Universal design with built-in accessibiliy features must become standard. Functional equivalency in accessing ICT must be assured for deaf people and other disability groups.World Federation of the Deaf has the vision that by 2020 UN CRPD obligations are implemented by government and service providers across the world. Practical examples are shown in the presentation.Examples of good practices- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) set out many goals which are followed up continuously.Phone companies are required to pay 1.0 to 1.6 % of their net revenues for financing telephone relay services for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing and speech impaired. Money is managed by the Federal Communication Commission FCC. They are actively controlling and improving the services for which there is open competition. FCC also employs persons with disabilities in its offices.* Television Broadcasting in USA, Canada, UK and other countries

Broadcasting licenses include the obligation to subtitle/caption up 100 % of the programs and 5 to 10 % with translation in sign language. In the USA, captioning of videos on demand (VOD) over the Internet must also be subtitled.Common in both examples: Government ensures that media industry must assume its responsibility to provide equal access to their products for persons with disabilities.Overview of Contributions to CWG-Internet open consultation* General agreement on lack of equipment, access, instructions, money and awareness in society
* Only 12 out of 193 member countries are participating, equal to approx. 6 % only!

Almost all of ITU member countries also have signed UN CRPD, but do not yet actively implement its requirements * Practically none of the highly developed and industrialized countries are participating in this

Process!* A whealth of resolutions and documents do not reach key players in government, politics and

manufacturing or are neglectedFundamental propositions* Do not work FOR persons with disabilities

Work in true partnership TOGETHER whit persons with disabilities:Equal conditions for pay, travel expenses etc.* Make and maintain personal contacts with persons with disabilities and their self-help

Organizations* Use persons with disabilities as the real experts on their disability. They are living every day with it. Use persons with disabilities as multiplicators for information and exchange, use their network for disemination of new technolgy and accessibility.

- Do not expect explosive development, there is a slow learning curve due to insufficient education* Get involved in local politics and support UN CRPD

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|  | January 29, 2016 | [ITU-T JCA-AHF Chairman (United States)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=60) | **Contribution to the Open Consultation of CWGsAndrea Saks, Chairman of ITU-T JCA-AHF**Without International Standards with accessibility features and increasing the awareness the of needs of persons with disability and specific needs by involving them directly in the standard writing process, the problem of poor access to the internet and ICTs will continue to exist.The need to involve all stake holders in the development of government policy has to be coupled with the understanding that International standards that improve the access to services have to be globally interoperable with full implementation of accessibility features. The barriers that would impede such collaboration to full participation have to be removed. To be able to run meetings including remote participation to include all stakeholders, accessibility guidelines have to be followed to make this collaboration possible. Accessibility services have to be provided as a normal process not as a special service. Providing fellowships to attend meetings, captioning and sign language and audio description are a few examples.The major problem in getting participation from this stakeholder group to attend meetings to contribute is also financial. With the lack of sufficient finance to provide these services so that persons with disabilities and specific needs can be realistically be invited to contribute as experts needs to be addressed. Remote participation tools are also not entirely accessible uniform in design to have complete accessible access. Some of the problems of access are not readily apparent to persons who not have a disability. The other financial factor that prevents inclusion in the standardization process is on that is still being decided by CWGs and that is how memberships to the ITU that NPO’s (non-profit organizations) representing Persons with disabilities and specific needs can be given without financial hardship. This certainly can have mutual benefits by also raising awareness of the ITU and its membership. They need to be able to have fees waived to join ITU group once verified. The ITU-T have produced guidelines, Technical Papers and Recommendations that actually provide technical global solutions to with the help of Persons with Disabilities who were actively involved in the creating them by attending meetings with accessibility support physically or remotely.The ones listed below by links are the most recent.* [ITU-T H.702 (11/2015) Accessibility profiles for IPTV systems](http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/recommendations/rec.aspx?rec=12648&lang=en)
* [ITU-T F.791 (11/2015) Accessibility terms and definitions](http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/recommendations/rec.aspx?rec=12624&lang=en)
* [FSTP-ACC-RemPart - Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all](http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC)
* [FSTP-AM - Guidelines for accessible meetings](http://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-AM)
* [DCAD Accessibility Guidelines](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/accessibility/dcad/Documents/IGF%202015%20DCAD%20Accessibility%20Guidelines%20-%20Final%20V8.docx) (2015) - produced in 10th IGF 2015, Brazil

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|  | January 29, 2016 | [Internet Society (United States)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=61) | The Internet Society is pleased to contribute to this Open Consultation on Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and Specific Needs. Our contribution offers a reflection on some of the impediments to Internet access for persons with disabilities and highlights some of the practical solutions that are available that can be implemented more broadly.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/61/Internet%20Society%20Contribution%20to%20CWG-Internet%20Online%20Open%20Consultation%20%282016-01-29%29.pdf) |
|  | January 29, 2016 | [Go ON UK (United Kingdom)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=63) | see attached a short submission of evidence around barriers to digital inclusion for disabled people------------------Go ON UK Evidence submission for the CWG-Internet Online Open Consultation on Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and Specific NeedsIntroductionGo ON UK is the UK’s leading digital skills charity. Founded in 2012 by our Chair, Martha Lane Fox, we actively seek out and work with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to identify opportunities and develop programmes that improve Basic Digital Skills among people and organisations across the UK.BackgroundAccording to the latest ONS figures Disabled people are far less likely to the user the internet (68%) compared to non-disabled people (92%) across every age bracket. [[1]](#footnote-1) The most recent Oxford internet institute puts these figures at over half (51%) of people with a disability using the Internet. This is a rise of 11 percentage points from 2011 (from 40% to 51%). However the report states that the 51% is still considerably less than the 84% of non-disabled respondents who do use the Internet[[2]](#footnote-2).What both these pieces of research highlight is the clear digital divide for disabled people. Interestingly though, in a recent survey by Lloyds Bank looking at digital and financial capability, just 6% of those surveyed responded that a disability was the reason they weren’t online. This could point to other factors being involved in this issue.[[3]](#footnote-3)Barriers to digital inclusion for disabled peopleSkillsCurrently Go ON UK does not track disability alongside our measure of Basic Digital Skills, however we can draw some correlation from similarities in demographics for those who are disabled and those lacking Basic Digital Skills. Recent research by Ofcom into disabled consumers’ use of communications services[[4]](#footnote-4) highlights a strong correlation between disability and age. Around a quarter (23%) of disabled consumers were aged 75+, compared to 6% of nondisabled consumers. Similarly our research shows that digital skills levels starts to decline amongst the 45+ demographics, culminating in the 65+ groups having a Basic Digital Skills level of 43%.[[5]](#footnote-5)We also see similar commonalities with lower socio-economic groupings, with disabled people more likely to live in DE households (37% vs. 25%), and people with learning disabilities reporting highest proportion living in these households (45%)[[6]](#footnote-6). Similarly, our own research shows that just 57% of DE households have all five Basic Digital Skills, compared to 90% of AB households.[[7]](#footnote-7)Research from the Oxford Internet Survey 2013 also shows that disabled Internet users score lower than non-disabled people across a number of measures of positive technology attitudes and skills.[[8]](#footnote-8)CostResearch has shown that disabled people pay on average an additional £550 per month on extra costs related to their disability. In addition to this, 19% of households that include a disabled person live in relative income poverty (below 60% of median income), compared to 14% of households without a disabled person.[[9]](#footnote-9)Device cost, and the availability of free skills training could therefore be a significant issue for disabled people. The broader importance of this barrier can be seen in research by Lloyds bank which showed that amongst the over 60’s, over quarter (26%) stated that cheaper costs would help them get on the internet.[[10]](#footnote-10)AccessInternet access among disabled consumers is significantly lower than for non-disabled consumers. Whilst we have seen increases over recent years, access remains lower among disabled consumers (65% overall) than among non-disabled consumers (88%). This has been shown to be even higher for those with multiple impairments, with levels of access at 49%.[[11]](#footnote-11)This is clearly then a significant issue that must be addressed, alongside ensuring that everyone has the skills to effectively engage with digital once that have the right access. Targeting and interventionWider literacy and numeracy supportDisabled adults are nearly 3 times as likely as non-disabled adults to have no formal qualifications, 30% and 11% respectively[[12]](#footnote-12), therefore attention must be paid to ensuring that users are comfortable with this before they can engage fully with digital skills. Mobile/non-traditional devicesAs many users in this category may not have traditional devices such as laptops, it’s important to offer different devices and be able to show the capabilities of various platforms.Flexible support networksThe availability of ongoing support beyond single sessions for skills and device familiarity. This will ensure that users achieve the full range of benefits that digital can offer.Low cost, low commitment accessTraditional 12 month broadband contracts and desktop PCs will not always be either affordable or suitable for this those with additional financial commitments, something we see in the statistics around the barriers to inclusion. [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/63/Go%20ON%20UK%20Evidence%20submissionAccess%20to%20the%20Internet%20for%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities.docx) |
|  | January 31, 2016 | [King Saud University (Saudi Arabia)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=65) | King Saud University (KSU) working As official in Saudi Arabia and its efforts to help persons with disabilities and specific needs; developed a policy for websites accessibility and made available related sources for the public (<https://accessibility.ksu.edu.sa/ar/sources-knowledge>).[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/65/Accessible_Form_CWG-Internet%20Open%20Consultations%20%281%29.docx) |
|  | January 31, 2016 | [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) (France)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=66)  | There are many challenges for persons with disabilities in accessing and using the Internet, in particular the lack of accessibility of websites and web software poses severe challenges to persons with disabilities, because the Web is today the predominant interface to the Internet. In fact, the Web provides unparalleled opportunities for persons with disabilities to fully participate independently and equally in all aspects of society. This includes current web-based information systems, such as mobile website and applications, as well as future technologies such as those based on the Internet of Things. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), it is essential to ensure implementation of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines for web accessibility, to ensure access to information and services provided on the Web, as a critical part of the Internet.-----------------**W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Comments the ITU Online Consultation: Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities**There are many challenges for persons with disabilities in accessing and using the Internet, including:* - Lack of accessibility features in operating systems, web browsers, and other software;
* - Difficulties in finding, acquiring, configuring, and using viable assistive technologies;
* - Prejudice and stigmatization of persons with disabilities and older people in societies;
* - Access barriers in the design of websites, including mobile contents and applications;

In particular the lack of accessibility of websites and web software poses severe challenges to persons with disabilities, because the Web is today the predominant interface to the Internet. In fact, the Web provides unparalleled opportunities for persons with disabilities to fully participate independently and equally in all aspects of society. This includes current web-based information systems, such as mobile website and applications, as well as future technologies such as those based on the Internet of Things.The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) maintains a set of guidelines that are internationally recognized as the standard for web accessibility by organizations and governments. These include:* **- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0** – defines accessibility requirements for web content, including text, images, multimedia, forms, and applications, also on mobile;
* **- User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG) 2.0** – defines accessibility requirements for web browsers, media players, mobile apps, and assistive technologies that render web content;
* **- Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines (ATAG) 2.0** – defines accessibility requirements for content management systems, editing software, and other tools used to create web content.

The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) also develops and maintains accessibility specifications, technical guidance for developers, and educational and awareness-raising materials to support the implementation of these guidelines in a variety of contexts.In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), it is essential to ensure implementation of these guidelines, to ensure access to information and services provided on the Web, as a critical part of the Internet. It is also essential to recognize the complementary roles and the increasing convergence of technologies on the Internet. For example, the rapid merging of telephony, television, radio, and the Web, and the propagation of the Web across different industries and devices, requires thorough coordination of standards development to ensure interoperability and compatibility, which in turn improves accessibility for people with disabilities and accelerates the implementation of accessibility in information and communication technologies (ICT) products and services.More information about the work of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), web accessibility standards and resources, and information about opportunities for participation and collaboration, are available at: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/> [View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/66/consultation.doc)  |
|  | February 01, 2016 | [Inclusive Design Research Centre, OCAD University (Canada)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=67) | There is a growing technology gap for anyone reliant on alternative access systems. At the same time emerging technical innovations and practices can be leveraged to better support diversity and individuals who cannot use mass produced designs. We describe a growing cluster of initiatives that are addressing this technology gap by matching demand at the margins with supply at the margins, pooling resources and supporting the design and development of accessible products, thereby creating more inclusive economies. A specific example in Ontario is described.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/67/IDRC%20Contribution%20to%20Consultation.docx) |
|  | February 02, 2016 | [Department of Communications and the Arts (Australia)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-oct2015.aspx?ListItemID=68) | SUMMARYIn response to the call for consultations on ‘Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needs’, the Australian Department of Communications and the Arts has made a submission. It provides an overview of some of the challenges faced in Australia and responses to them. It includes information of Australian activities and best practice examples. The contribution highlights challenges facing people with disability in accessing and using the internet, such as affordability, internet bandwidth requirements for some applications and accessibility of online content. It also emphasises the importance of shared responsibility for addressing barriers to internet access for people with disability among government, industry and other stakeholders, as well as the need to inform and empower individuals. Australia’s submission reflects on domestic actions such the Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy, Australia’s National Relay Service, relevant domestic legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The contribution also recognises international actions, such as the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 (WCAG2.0) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[View submitted document online](http://www.itu.int/en/Lists/consultationOct2015/Attachments/68/CWG-Internet%20Open%20Consultations%20-%20Australian%20response.docx) |

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1. [ONS Internet Users 2015](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-users/2015/stb-ia-2015.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Oxford Internet Survey 2013 Cultures of the Internet: The Internet in Britain](http://oxis.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2014/11/OxIS-2013.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2016](http://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.asp) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Ofcom, Disabled consumers’ use of communications devices, October 2015](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/1515282/Disabled_consumers_use_of_communications_services.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Go ON UK Basic Digital Skills UK Report 2015](https://goon-uk-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/Basic%20Digital%20Skills_UK%20Report%202015_131015_FINAL.pdf?utm_source=insights%20page&utm_medium=bdsresearch&utm_campaign=insights) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Ofcom, Disabled consumers’ use of communications devices, October 2015](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/1515282/Disabled_consumers_use_of_communications_services.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Go ON UK Basic Digital Skills UK Report 2015](https://goon-uk-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/Basic%20Digital%20Skills_UK%20Report%202015_131015_FINAL.pdf?utm_source=insights%20page&utm_medium=bdsresearch&utm_campaign=insights) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [Oxford Internet Survey 2013 Cultures of the Internet: The Internet in Britain](http://oxis.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2014/11/OxIS-2013.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Papworth Trust, Disability in the United Kingdom](http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/UK%20Disability%20facts%20and%20figures%20report%202014.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2016](http://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.asp) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [Ofcom, Disabled consumers’ use of communications devices, October 2015](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/1515282/Disabled_consumers_use_of_communications_services.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [Papworth Trust, Disability in the United Kingdom](http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/UK%20Disability%20facts%20and%20figures%20report%202014.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)