

Statement by Ms. Kicki Nordstrom

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Madam chairperson, distinguished delegates, observers, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of 600,000,000 people with disabilities around the world, and as the chairperson of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) which consists of seven major disability organizations, such as World Blind Union, World Federation of the Deaf, World Federation of the Deaf-Blind, Disabled People's International, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International and the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to you for allowing me this great opportunity to speak here. People with disabilities are specifically and directly effected by the way in which the information content, methods of communication and ICTs are designed, developed and used. However, our needs and requirements are often unknown, misunderstood and even, some time, misrepresented. Information content, methods of communication and ICTs have always been developed for people who can see with their eye sight, can hear with their ears, can move freely with their arms and legs and can comprehend and learn with their intellectual/cognitive abilities leaving accessibility matter for us in the hands of all mighty God and charity-minded super human beings. However, we are here with genuine hope that the real inclusive information society should do better than what we have to live with up till now.

We are here to participate in good faith throughout this people-oriented process with the hope that our needs and problems can be reflected and conveyed directly to the world community. We believe the disability dimension will only help bring more positive values to the information society. We would like to see the information society in which the fundamental rights to accessible information content, methods of communication and ICTs must be accepted, respected and met with positive response. We, therefore, would like to call upon all sides, especially member states' delegations, to include the concept of inclusive design and ICTs development for all in the declaration of principles as proposed by the government of Thailand and other organizations. We would also like to have all wsis-related documents to be produced and distributed in formats and/or medium which are accessible to persons with disabilities. This particular sentence should appear as an integral part of all documents to be signed by member state leaders in December.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my firm belief that equal access to information content, methods of communication and ICTs for all through inclusive design principle and reasonable accommodations is good for every one. It is technologically possible. It makes economic sense. It represents socially responsible principle and practice. It is politically and morally correct. And without it, we are a great risk of excluding

600,000,000 persons with disabilities from the information society which will end up being the society for some, not for all.