

Panel Discussion: How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) improve digital accessibility for persons with disabilities?

A MIKTA-ITU reflection within WSIS+20

May 30

14:00-14:45

ITU Headquarters – Room K2

I. Introduction

The MIKTA countries (Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia) will participate in a panel discussion along with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and experts on the matter during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) plus 20 (WSIS+20).

In 2024, Mexico undertook MIKTA's Chairmanship for the third time with the common goal of advancing a sustainable development that is fair and equitable for all.

Considering that 16% of the world's population lives with a disability, and as State parties of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), WSIS+20 presents a unique platform for the MIKTA countries to reflect on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can enhance digital accessibility with the main objective of leaving no one behind in a digital world.

Digital accessibility involves designing digital systems and services to enable access for individuals, including those with disabilities. Its implementation in all countries is essential to ensure that everyone's right to communicate in the digital world is respected.

II. Background

In 2013, Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia established MIKTA as a cross-regional partnership of like-minded countries with shared values -democracy, international law upholding, multilateralism an international cooperation- and the common goal to contribute positively to global governance.

Since its inception, MIKTA's efforts have focused primarily on fostering mutual understanding, deepening bilateral relations, intensifying consultations and cooperation, and developing intra-MIKTA activities on core areas of collaboration.

MIKTA countries have enacted legislation and developed policy frameworks to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and promote accessibility. For example, Australia has the Disability Discrimination Act. Similarly, Türkiye has the Law on Disabled People, which aims to ensure the rights and integration of persons with disabilities into society.



For instance, in Indonesia the government launched a national action plan for persons with disabilities for 2021-2024, and the Republic of Korea has the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected. Finally, Mexico has the General Act on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to promote, protect and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and combat stigma and discrimination.

In the same way, ITU and WSIS have been at the forefront of advocating for digital accessibility to ensure that the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are accessible to all, regardless of their abilities or circumstances.

Over the past two decades, WSIS has recognized the importance of digital accessibility as a fundamental aspect of ensuring that ICTs contribute to sustainable development and social inclusion. It has facilitated discussions, workshops, and partnerships aimed at mainstreaming accessibility considerations into ICT policies and initiatives.

III. Objectives

1. Foster a deeper understanding on the importance of leveraging emerging technologies to promote inclusion and reduce the digital divide.
2. Identify the main challenges faced by persons with disabilities in accessing digital platforms and services.
3. Underscore the relevance of involving persons with disabilities in the designing process of AI to identify and address potential biases in the data or algorithms used by AI systems, as well as to ensure that AI systems are designed with the end-user in mind.
4. Share good practices and innovative solutions on the use of emerging technologies to promote digital accessibility.
5. Inspire concrete actions and commitments from stakeholders to prioritize and invest in initiatives that advance digital accessibility.

IV. How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) improve digital accessibility?

Guiding questions

1. How can emerging technologies, such as AI, can support inclusion and improve digital accessibility?
2. What are the existing barriers and challenges to digital accessibility for persons with disabilities?
 - a. How do persons with disabilities perceive and experience digital accessibility issues in their daily lives?
 - b. How do these challenges vary across different digital platforms, including websites, mobile applications, and online services?



- c. What are the implications of inaccessible digital environments for the social inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities?

Collaboration with persons with disabilities is pivotal for this conversation. Their perspective and firsthand experiences to understand the impact of accessibility issues and to develop effective solutions is critical.

3. How can international cooperation and knowledge sharing facilitate the scaling and replication of AI-driven accessibility solutions globally?
4. What are some innovative AI-driven technologies and tools that have been developed to improve digital accessibility?

V. Format

Forty-five minutes discussion among representatives of the MIKTA countries and a representative of the ITU.

- Introduction by the Moderator – 3 min.
 - Welcome remarks.
 - Introduction of panelists.
- Moderated discussion – 30 min.
 - Moderator asks the guiding questions to the panelists.
 - Panelists respond, exchange ideas and share insights.
- Audience Interaction – 10 min.
 - Q&A Session: audience members pose questions to the panelists.
- Closing by the Moderator – 2 min.
 - Recap of the main points discussed during the session.
 - Emphasize actionable insights or recommendations derived from the discussion.