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**1. Introduction**

The first G3ict (Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies) Global Forum was held 26 March 2007 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, U.S.A. This is a “flagship advocacy initiative” of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, [G@ID](#). This forum served as an interactive venue for key stakeholders and leading experts from around the world to come together to create a consensus and set direction for the future of accessible and inclusive information and communication technologies for persons with disabilities. This initial forum will be just one in a series of global and regional forums scheduled to take place around the world over the next two and a half years. This document provides a report of the initial global forum to allow the ITU community to be aware of the matters discussed and to enable possible future actions by that community.

**2. Executive Summary**

Some 200 representatives of industry, government, academia and civil society attended the 1st G3ict Global Forum, which was organized by the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development and the Boston-based Wireless Internet Institute, in cooperation with the UN Secretariat of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The timing and venue of the Forum was chosen to support the signing ceremony of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The ITU was represented at this invitation-only event to demonstrate its continued commitment to providing solutions encouraging access for all to telecommunications technologies and services.

This event emphasized the importance of technical standards to provide capabilities at affordable costs. It also stressed the need for legislative action to encourage the use of those technical standards. Input was provided by several individuals to highlight the perspective of those with various disabilities. Identifying core areas of opportunity to foster greater accessibility of ICTs for persons with disabilities was a major objective of this Forum.

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The organizers are preparing a book to document the Forum, which they expect to publish by June 2007. Several future global and regional meetings are planned, including one early 2008 in Geneva. (See Annex 3 to this document.) There are four Working Groups in the Initiative, one of which is focused on Standardization and Harmonization. Volunteers are sought to populate these Working Groups and continue the work started at this Forum.

### 3. Background

About 18% of people worldwide live with some kind of disability, including those related to aging; 10% - more than 600 million people - live with life-altering disabilities, two thirds of which are in developing countries. As prominently recognized at the World Summit on the Information Society, these demographic circumstances present considerable challenges on the one hand, and enormous opportunities on the other, for the increasingly important role of ICTs. While new ICTs can worsen the exclusion experienced by disabled persons in terms of their access to information and full participation to society, they can also provide extraordinary assistive solutions to empower them. New, proven technologies can enhance the lives of people with disabilities and support their rights as citizens and participants in their communities' social and economic activities - but only if these solutions are affordable.

On 4 December 2006, the United Nations officially launched the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its [Optional Protocol](#), to be adopted simultaneously with the Convention. This action in protecting Human Rights is expected to foster a transformation and enhance Member States' legislations and regulations over the next few years. It is recognized, however, that economic hurdles may continue to inhibit the actual implementation of legislative and regulatory advances concerning the mandated ICT solutions for persons living with disabilities. On 30 March 2007, the official signing ceremony of the Convention was expecting 70 signatory nations.

The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), an initiative approved by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006, was launched after comprehensive worldwide consultations with governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical and Internet communities and academia. The *Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communications Technologies*, organized by the [Wireless Internet Institute](#) in collaboration with the Global Alliance, seeks the broadest possible involvement of the world's leading ICT firms, on the model of the *Wireless Internet Opportunity for Developing Countries* program launched in 2003 with the UNICT Task Force. It intends to bring together civil society organizations (notably those representing disabled persons) UN Enable, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF and other UN-affiliated institutions as well as national and local government organizations, academia and the private sector, all of whom are contributing to exploring and developing solutions and recommendations in the context of their respective mandates. A Program Steering Committee will be constituted with key constituents chosen in coordination with the Global Alliance Secretariat. The Program term is two years and four months (December 2006 to March 2009).

Simão Ferraz de Campos Neto (ITU-TSB) had been following the progress of this initiative and had been interacting with Axel Leblois, Executive Director, G3ict, to ensure that the ITU was one of the UN-affiliated institutions involved with the G3ict. When the ITU was invited to the 26 March 2007 Forum in New York, scheduling conflicts among the principle accessibility advocates in the ITU community and cost considerations led to an agreement that Greg Ratta would attend the Forum on behalf of the ITU community and prepare a report. This document is that report.

## 4. Summary of Discussions

### 4.1 Opening of the Forum

Welcome remarks were provided via recorded video by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations. This was the same message that had been used to open the first organizing meeting in Silicon Valley earlier in the year. The Secretary General's comments emphasized the importance of Information and Communications technology for improving the quality of life for all and that diversity increases strength. He indicated that the Global alliance for ICT was launched in June 2006 for a single platform for ICT in the "Millennium Development" work. It is expected to reach out to those marginalized by barriers to ICT. The objective is to extend the circle of stakeholders to deliver the promises of technology. He stated that 10% of the world population has some form of disability and that only 1 – 2% of disabled children in the developing world received education.

Introductory remarks were extended by Global Forum Chairperson, Ambassador Luis Gallegos of Ecuador, Former Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. He indicated that the convention on disabilities to be signed on 30 March was the first human rights convention of the new millennium and the 8<sup>th</sup> human rights convention created by the UN. He stated that it is an enforceable convention and that Article 9 of the convention is the baseline to make a better world. (Article 9 of the convention has been included as Annex 1 to this report).

A perspective from the Global Alliance, emphasizing the significance of the G3ict initiative, was provided by Sarbuland Khan, Executive Coordinator of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development. He noted the importance of keeping in mind the overall objective of achieving the Millennium Developments Goals.

An overview of the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its implications for ICTs was delivered by Jean-Pierre Gonnot, Chief of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The goals and objectives of meeting and a review of agenda were provided by Axel Leblois. He emphasized that industry vendors should incorporate accessibility features from the start of the product development. He also counselled that tackling the issue of accessibility too late in the product life cycle can lead to a higher cost. Legislations and regulations should aim at creating unified markets for accessible products, he said, so as to encourage mass production at low cost. He used the model of mobile communications in which people can make calls through a cell phone that costs very little is because the same telephone is being used in the United States, Kenya and Latin America. He opined that the same dynamics of mass production, standardization and harmonization can be achieved for assistive technologies and for inclusive ICT products in general.

The keynote address, *From Digital Divide to Digital Diversity - The Imperative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies*, was presented by Emilie McCabe, General Manager, IBM Global Public Sector. This addressed the current trends in demographics, global economics and social responsibility that are fuelling the need for inclusive information and communication technologies (ICT). To successfully meet this global human challenge requires new models of collaborative innovation. ICT vendors need to focus on global solutions for greater accessibility and assistive technologies, because by 2025 it is expected that >20% of the industrialized nations will be over 60 or novice ICT users and that 16% of the 6 Billion inhabitants have traditional disabilities. She encouraged that the needs of the population, and not technology, drive designs. expected benefits of greater standardization and harmonization for all stakeholders.

#### **4.2 Panel - *Raising the challenge for a more accessible information society: case studies and perspectives from persons with disabilities***

This panel examined the pervasive impact of ICTs on all aspects of contemporary life from the perspective of persons living with disabilities. Research of accessibility gaps among common ICT products were presented, as well as hands-on examples of good practices and challenges covering the workplace, home, media, e-government, and public services applications. This panel was moderated by C. N. Madhusudan, President, NiiT Ventures, who indicated in his opening statement that in India no one was no more than 2 km from a technical training centre. He described “minimally invasive learning” in which slum children became computer literate by themselves.

Martin Gould, Director of Research and Technology for the National Council on Disability (USA), presented the results of research on the utility of technologies for those with disabilities. His presentation included a "Report Card" that evaluated six technologies (ATMs, Cell Phones, Distance Learning Software, Personal Digital Assistants, Televisions, and Voice Recognition Software) for accessibility by various classes of disabled individuals (Low Vision, Blind, Hard of Hearing, Deaf, Upper-mobility impaired, Lower-mobility impaired and Cognitive). Mr Gould, in discussing the "report card," stated that cell phone technology performed the worst in his studies. While the actual presentation delivered by Mr Gould is not available, there is a report online that apparently formed the basis of that presentation:

<http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2004/newmarketplace.htm#accessibilitygrades>. In particular, Table 1 of that online report shows the "report card" that was displayed to the Forum.

Larry Goldberg, Director of WGBH, a television station in the U.S.A., and a member of the National Center for Accessible Media, presented a history of accessibility support in the TV broadcast industry since the mid-1950s. He indicated how government regulations have helped to fuel this development that encompassed closed captioning, real-time captioning and video description. Canada now requires that 90% of TV programmes be captioned, and in the United Kingdom up to 5% of TV programmes are required to show a sign language translator by 2015. In Japan, 100% of the programming is to be closed captioned by 2008. Mexico and Australia are preparing similar legislation to make TV more accessible.

Ilene Morris-Sambur, Founder and CEO of Coraworks, indicated that her company provides incentives for telework and outsourcing. Her efforts were based on experiences in Walter Reed Hospital with disabled soldiers who recover faster when they focus on building skills that will help them in the long term. She emphasized that assistive technologies currently exist and that they have to be brought to workers with disabilities, instead of trying to bring these workers to the workplace. This presentation was enhanced through an Internet-based messaging service connection with a disabled client of Coraworks that used text and video.

Caroline Millous, Director of Projet Handicap at Air France, emphasized the need to focus on the abilities of all employees, rather than on the dis-abilities. She described how reasonable accommodations have been made at Air France to allow the company to benefit from a richer set of contributions from all its employees.

Rene Leon, Program Coordinator of POETA with the Organization of American States, reported that the Trust for the Americas was started in 1997. POETA is the “Partnership for Opportunities in Employment Trough Technologies in the Americas.” He indicated that the objectives of POETA are:

1. Increase Local Organizations effectiveness to promote ICT Training, Job Inclusion and/or Vocational Services for the Community, especially for People with Disabilities (PWD)
2. Provide High-Tech Skills Training

3. Establishment of a Job-Readiness Training Program or Non-Formal Education Programs
4. Implement a Promotion Plan for POETA with Local Business
5. Establishment of a Training and Technology Center and Basic Statistics

He reported that there are 50 million disabled persons in Latin America and that 80 – 90% of them are outside of the job market.

Steven M. Rothstein, President of the Perkins School for the Blind, indicated that many places still view access to education as not appropriate for deaf and blind persons. He stated that the use of Braille is the single greatest factor in the employability of the blind.

Preeti Kumar, Founder, President and CEO of Deque Systems and representing General Electric, stated that 20% of the GE consumer base is disabled or aged. She reported that attention to accessibility matters is positive for the bottom-line value of the corporation. She stated that the cost of addressing accessibility matters in the design of the company website was 5 – 10% of the total cost of that design.

### **4.3 Panel - *Identifying core areas of opportunity to foster greater accessibility of ICTs for persons with disabilities***

This panel examined the potential for ICT industries that develop inclusive products and services from a market and industry perspective. Strategies that can best support the development of accessible and assistive features for ICT products were discussed, including through Private-Public Partnerships. Core areas of opportunities were identified, as well as specific funding and R&D collaborative methods which industry could benefit from. The panel was moderated by John Vaughn, Chairman of the National Council on Disability in Washington, DC.

Barry K. Fingerhut, General Partner of Synconium, indicated that he was seeing a “significant beginning of venture capital investment.” Note that Synconium provides venture capital funding for products and services of benefit to the handicapped.

Ted Henter, Director of Freedom Scientific and the creator of JAWS, presented the perspective of an entrepreneur and made suggestions for cooperation and competition. “Jaws” is a screen reader that works with a PC to provide access to today’s software applications and the Internet. With its internal software speech synthesizer and the computer’s sound card, information from the screen is read aloud, providing technology to access a wide variety of information, education and job related applications. JAWS also outputs to refreshable braille displays.

Victor Tsaran, Accessibility Program Manager at Yahoo Corporation, indicated that accessibility is a moving target. With the rapid rise of user-generated video sharing via the Internet, the leading edge challenge is to have captioning for these video streams.

Frank Hecker, Executive Director, “Open and Accessible: New models for collaborative innovation” at Mozilla Foundation, indicated that the mission of his organization is to make open source for accessibility features on the PC, Macintosh and Linux platforms. The intention is to expand the pool of accessibility developers. The status of this effort and links to accessibility software is available at <http://www.mozilla.org/access/>.

Nikolaos Floratos, General Director of e-ISOTIS in Athens, described the ASK-IT project to make the cell phone, “the best companion of elderly and disabled persons.” ISOTIS means equality in ancient Greek and “Equality for all in the Information Society” is the mission of e-ISOTIS. ASK-IT is an integrated project, partly funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme, e-Inclusion. The driving vision behind the ASK-IT project is to develop services based on Information Communication Technologies (ICT) that will allow Mobility Impaired people to live more independently. Through a device (mobile phone, PDA) users will have access to relevant



and real-time information primarily for travelling but also while home, for work and leisure services. The emphasis is on a seamless service provision and a device that is intelligent enough to address the personal needs and preferences of the user. For example, information for a visually impaired person will be given orally, while for an illiterate person mostly in graphics. The project involves a demonstration phase during which the ASK-IT system will be tested and evaluated in 8 cities across Europe. ASK-IT involves 57 partners from a range of organisation, including industry, research institutes and European user associations and is coordinated by SIEMENS and CERTH/HIT (Hellenic Institute of Transport, Greece). For more information about this project, the reader is directed to: <http://www.ask-it.org/about.php>.

Emdad Khan, Founder, President and CEO of Internet Speech, described netECHO, a system that uses ordinary telephones for information access. Users may speak commands into a telephone and have a screen reader provide aural responses. More information about this product, including demonstrations, is available at <http://www.internetspeech.com>.

Michael Paciello, The Paciello Group Founder and Principal and TEITAC, Co-Chair for Section 508/255 Revision, presented research about improved interactive voice systems that include real-time captioning, descriptive video service and voice recognition. He emphasized an approach to rely upon open source, assistive technology to reduce development costs. The third wave of accessibility is an infrastructure running across multiple platforms. There is a technology accessibility gap and the gap is widening. He stressed a need to get away from “fear-based” incentives and emphasize the positive value to business by addressing accessibility needs. TEITAC (Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee) is a US federal advisory committee providing recommendations for updates of accessibility standards issued under section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and guidelines under section 255 of the Telecommunications Act. Through its Section 508/255 Revision, TEITAC hopes to build upon existing standards to better serve disabled Americans. The Section 508 Refresh will further specify how US government agencies are expected to make electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities, which involves everything from Web sites to applications to multimedia and office products such as faxes and copiers. In addition, anything the government uses, buys, maintains or procures needs to meet a series of access standards developed by the access board. TEITAC members represent over forty industries, disability groups, national and international standard-setting bodies, and government agencies. There are several sub-committees and task forces within TEITAC, one of which is devoted to Telecommunications. All TEITAC activities are open to the public; consult [http://teitac.org/wiki/TEITAC\\_Wiki#Subcommittees](http://teitac.org/wiki/TEITAC_Wiki#Subcommittees) for more information.

#### **4.4 Panel - *Harmonization and standardization of accessible and assistive technologies: how to make it work on a global scale?***

This panel focused on the role of industry consortia, NGOs, standardization organizations, and international institutions in tackling some of the core areas of opportunities discussed during the earlier sessions. The panel reflected on recent global standardization success stories and current efforts by standardization organizations to determine which success factors could be leveraged to foster harmonization and standardization of key categories of accessible and assistive ICTs. The panel chair and panellists contributed practical suggestions to foster new initiatives and/or work methods with multiple stakeholders. This panel was moderated by Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero, Deputy Head of the e-Inclusion Unit in the European Union Directorate General, Information Society and Media. She initiated the panel by indicating that there is strong support among the European public for the objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “even if it costs money.” She stressed that standardization is the key to avoid future problems.

Judy Brewer, Director of the Web Accessibility Initiative in the World Wide Web Consortium, indicated that the Web has the ability to be even more accessible than other parts of society. Adaptable policy frameworks should be developed, she said, because the technology continues to advance all the time, and it is important to keep the policy frameworks up to date with the technology. Solutions that were developed in a particular industry or standards organization should not be automatically made available globally. She stressed that it is very important to partner with disability organizations within every country and try to make sure that those solutions are relevant locally in order to yield the best solutions. The web is one of the “core resources” in many countries for people to participate in different aspects of society, including education, employment, news, health-care information, civic participation and social networking. The Web Accessibility Initiative is responsible for developing guidelines for accessible websites, browsers and media players, as well as establishing guidelines for the software used to produce accessible content. It also produces educational material on how to make the web more accessible in different countries, including information on increasing public awareness of the need for web accessibility, and how to develop and maintain adaptable policy frameworks for ever-changing technology. More information on the Web Accessibility Initiative is available at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>.

Hajime Yamada, Toyo University, Japan and Chairperson of the Standardization Investigation Committee for Improvement of Accessibility Common to Areas of Information Technology and Software Products, discussed several Japanese accessibility standards. One of these (JIS X8341) was submitted in part to ISO and in part to the ITU. That latter part is now published as ITU-T Recommendation F.790.

Ken Salaets, Executive Director of Access Standards and Director of Government Relations at the Information Technology Industry Council, emphasized that standards spread costs and enable small businesses to compete. He indicated that peer pressure is an effective motivator for industrial players.

Tim Creagan, Senior Accessibility Specialist with the Technical and Information Services Access Board, United States, indicated that his organization has legislative authority to define IT and ICT compliance requirements to Section 255 and Section 508 of United States law. He advised that having broad legislative authorization and reliance upon input from all parties is essential to the development of effective consensus-based standards.

Chiara Giovannini, Consumer Association in Standards (ANEC), described how this organization provides the consumer perspective in public policy. This group works with the ETSI Technical Committee on human Factors. More information about ANEC may be found at <http://www.anec.org/>.

Rodolfo Cattani, Member of the Executive Committee of the European Disability Forum and Chair of the Commission for Liaising with the European Union, European Blind Union, stated that standards development organizations seem to spend a great deal of time on bureaucratic matters. Often an end user has no idea when a standard is complete. He stressed that standards can benefit vendors and end-users, alike. He advised that the political side of standards is as important as the technical content. He opined that the greatest flaw of standards is that they are voluntary. More information about the European Blind Union may be found at <http://www.euroblind.org/>.

#### **4.5 Panel - Legislation, regulations, procurement rules, and enforcement: how can the Public Sector best contribute to fostering greater awareness, innovation and compliance?**

This panel included government representatives from around the world. Each panellist presented his or her perspective with best practices examples and suggested recommendations for legislative and regulatory enforcement. The framework of the Digital Inclusion Index, measuring countries' inclusiveness from an ICT standpoint, was described at the end. This panel was moderated by

Marcel Boisard, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and Former Executive Director of UNITAR. He indicated that over 70 member states will sign the Convention on 30 March. He asked the panellists to consider if legislation can hurt innovation.

Ambassador Anda Filip, Director of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, indicated that parliaments can foster compliance for accessibility. The IPU is a global organization of national parliaments that has existed for over 100 years. She indicated that many parliaments today use the Internet as a vital tool in the legislative process. As an example, she mentioned that Austria has transparent involvement of all citizens through electronic record keeping in the development of all laws.

Peter Blanck, University Professor and Chairman of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University and Co-Director of the University of the Trondheim eAccessibility Project, discussed the issue of whether the World Wide Web can be considered a “place” where accessibility regulations must apply and mentioned lawsuits in process within the United States. He noted that the Internet is explicitly covered in UK and Australian law. Another topic of current legal discussion is whether ships of nation A are to be compliant with the accessibility laws of nation B, when they are in ports of nation B.

Tamas Babinski, Accessibility and Section 508 Consultant/Assistive Technology Analyst at the Project Performance Corporation and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, indicated that governments must enforce compliance and that corporations doing business with governments should follow the regulations of those governments. In this way, governments can influence the operation of technology and services offered within the marketplace.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum, emphasized that legislation – as well as standards – must be developed with the direct inclusion of those disabled individuals who are to be served by such actions. In short, his message was, “Nothing about us without us!” The European Disability Forum is a European umbrella organisation representing more than 50 million disabled people in Europe. Its mission is to ensure disabled citizens' full access to fundamental and human rights through their active involvement in policy development and implementation in the European Union. More information about the European Disability Forum may be found at <http://www.edf-feeph.org/>.

Hendrietta Ipeleng Bogopane-Zulu, Chairperson of the South African Parliament at the National Assembly, indicated that the digital divide still exists between people with disabilities and those who are non-disabled. She elaborated that beyond access to the Web, the problem for many developing countries was basically affordability, with support systems and training also factors in the situation. She emphasized that ICT cannot replace the human touch. She encouraged the participants to celebrate capabilities and not focus on disabilities.

Dipendra Manocha, Director of IT and Services for the National Association for the Blind, New Delhi, India, discussed gaps in standards. He mentioned the challenge of a basic engine for converting text to speech. He also complained of the different and seemingly endless supply of Application Program interfaces. More information about the National Association for the Blind may be found at <http://www.nabdelhi.org/>.

Peter Brecke, Professor at the Georgia Tech Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, described the progress in reating a benchmark, the Digital Inclusion Index for Disabled Persons. He indicated that he is doing the analysis of the survey results made of all participants in the Forum. (The input provided on behalf of the ITU is shown in Annex [2](#) to this document.) The objective of this effort is to create a measure of the extent to which different countries are promoting and achieving access to, and use of, digital information for all. It is expected that this is to form part of the output of this Global Forum.



#### **4.6 Summary of findings and next steps**

Axel Leblois provided a summary of key findings from the panels. He indicated that the core message is:

- there are large opportunities for all stakeholders;
- good results are possible when various groups are brought together, including the disabled, in system design; and
- there is a need to share information on a larger scale.

He indicated that the next step was to network and promote the topics covered to a larger set of players so as to foster more consensus building. The intention of the organizers is to publish the proceedings of the Forum as a book by June 2007; additional information is available at [http://www.g3ict.com/07\\_book1.htm](http://www.g3ict.com/07_book1.htm). Furthermore, there is a series of Forums planned in many venues around the globe; the planned venues are indicated in Annex 3 to this document. (Mr Leblois indicated that the leadership will consider additional venues, if requested.)

Mr Leblois indicated that there are four Working Groups in the Initiative, along the lines of the four panels, as reflected at <http://www.g3ict.com/workgroups.htm>. One of these is focused on Standardization and Harmonization. Volunteers are sought to populate these Working Groups and continue the work started at this Forum. Interested parties should contact the Program Development Manger, Pauley Tedoff, at [ptedoff@g3ict.com](mailto:ptedoff@g3ict.com).

Finally, Mr Leblois stated that the “Digital Inclusion Index for Disabled Persons,” which was described [above](#) in clause 4.5, is an important deliverable of this initiative.

Alex Mejia, Executive Director of CIFAL in Atlanta, introduced the Honourable Mayor Apolinar Salcedo of Cali, Colombia, who delivered an impassioned call for action by local governments.

Luis Gallegos, the Global Forum chairperson, thanked the participants for their involvement.

Sarbuland Khan, the Executive Coordinator of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, closed the meeting by observing that partnerships can produce results.

#### **5. Signing Ceremony for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

While not part of the 1st Global Forum on ICT, those interested in the activities of that Forum may also be interested the Signature Ceremony of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that occurred on 30 March 2007 and received 81 signatures. Therefore, the following links from the United Nations News Service are offered:

- Signature Ceremony of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [[Programme](#)]
- Webcast in English of the Ceremony [[Archived Video](#)] (*2 hours and 50 minutes*)
- Webcast in Original Languages of the Ceremony [[Archived Video](#)] (*2 hours and 50 minutes*)

Additional videos of high-level dialogue and press interviews of various leaders may be found at <http://www.un.org/webcast/2007.html>.

## 6. References

The notes and memory of the ITU representative were enhanced by incorporating material in this report that was adapted from the following sources:

- [ANEC] ANEC (Consumer Association in Standards) website (<http://www.anec.org/>).
- [ASK] Ambient Intelligence System of Agents for Knowledge-based and Integrated Services for Mobility Impaired users website (<http://www.ask-it.org/about.php>).
- [BLIND] European Blind Union website (<http://www.euroblind.org/>).
- [EDF] European Disability Forum website (<http://www.edf-feph.org/>).
- [G@id] United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development website, (<http://www.un-gaid.org>).
- [ISOTIS] Information Society Open to ImpairmentS (ISOTIS) website (<http://www.e-isotis.org/>).
- [ITU] ITU webpage on accessibility (<http://itu.int/ITU-T/studygroups/com16/accessibility>).
- [JAWS] Freedom Scientific website ([http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs\\_products/software\\_jaws.asp](http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/software_jaws.asp)).
- [MOZ] Mozilla Foundation accessibility website (<http://www.mozilla.org/access/>).
- [NAB] National Association of the Blind website (<http://www.nabdelhi.org/>).
- [NCD] National Council on Disability website (<http://www.ncd.gov>).
- [netECHO] Internet Speech website (<http://www.internetspeech.com/>).
- [POETA] POETA website (<http://www.trustfortheamericas.org/poeta-report.htm>).
- [TEITAC] Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee website (<http://teitac.org/>).
- [UN] *New technologies bringing persons with disabilities into mainstream, UN forum told*, United Nations News Service, 26 March 2007 (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?Cr=disabilities&NewsID=22017>).
- [W2i] Wireless Internet Institute website (<http://www.w2i.org/>).
- [W3C] Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium website (<http://www.w3.org/WAI>).

### Annex 1

#### Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

#### ARTICLE 9 - ACCESSIBILITY

1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These

measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- (a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- (b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to:

- (a) Develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
- (b) Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- (c) Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
- (d) Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;
- (e) Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public;
- (f) Promote other appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information;
- (g) Promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communication technologies and systems, including the Internet;
- (h) Promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.

## **Annex 2**

### **ITU Input to the Initial Questionnaire for a Digital Inclusion Index for Disabled Persons**

1. Do you have a disability that affects your ability to access or send information using digital information and communications technologies?

*No*

2. Which disabilities that affect one's ability to use those technologies do you feel knowledgeable about?

*The work of the International Telecommunications Union takes into account oral, aural, and visual dexterity in telecommunications.*

3. What do you believe are the most important access needs or issues for those technologies with regards to the disabilities you know well?

(Please list those needs or issues.)

*The ITU is advocating a principle of "total conversation." A Total Conversation service is an audiovisual conversation service providing bidirectional, symmetric, real-time transfer of motion video, text and voice among users in two or more locations. Support for accessibility needs should be designed from the inception of systems, rather than retrofit.*

*There is a need to have equal access to telecommunication services for all. Examples of areas for improvement include:*

- *difficulty with volume levels on phones, hearing aids being useless with some phones and the newer text-to-speech systems;*
- *difficulty interacting with speech recognition systems, especially those that provide the user absolutely no option to use an alternative input method.*

4. What variables or indicators would you recommend we include as part of a Disabilities Digital Inclusion Index to measure how well a given country ensures that Article 9 of the Convention is implemented effectively?

*a.) Percentage of public services that are reachable through alternative means (e.g., TTY, e-mail, text chat, etc.)*

*b.) List of incentives that are put into place to encourage (or force) compliance to laws or guidelines, and identification of the steps that are taken to put such guidelines in place.*

*c.) Techniques for measuring effectiveness or "correctness" of implementation. For example, one could assess how well a telecommunications technical standard covers accessibility needs using the accessibility check list at <http://itu.int/ITU-T/studygroups/com16/accessibility/docs/tacl.pdf>.*

*d.) What regulatory support is given in the implementation of International Standardization? For each country, identification of how the use of these types of guidelines (ITU, ISO, etc) are taken into account in the development and adoption of the national standards, and the incorporation of these accessibility-aware standards into regulations and legislation.*

*e.) Identification of educational requirements for learning about disabilities in preparing for diploma and certifications of designers of new emerging technologies.*

5. Which information sources do you know that could be used to give us a sense of how well your or any other country ensures that Article 9 of the Convention is implemented effectively?

*As a participant on behalf of an IGO, I am not in position to provide an answer at this time.*

6. What country or countries do you think you can speak authoritatively about in regards to this matter?

*As a participant on behalf of an IGO, I am not in position to provide an answer at this time.*

**Annex 3**  
**Planned Events of the G3ict**

March 26, 2007	1st Global Forum	United Nations Headquarters, New York
May 22-23, 2007	Wireless Opportunities for Disabled Persons Roundtable, Wireless Internet Institute (W2i) Digital Cities Conference	Chicago, IL
September, 2007	Regional Forum	Cali, Colombia
October 2007	Fostering Innovation, R&D and Venture Capital in Support of Assistive Technologies	New York, NY
November 2007	Regional Forum	Johannesburg, South Africa
February 2008	2nd Global Forum	Palais des Nations, Genève
2Q 2008	Regional Forum	New Delhi, India
3Q 2008	Regional Forum	Chengdu, China
4Q 2008	Regional Forum	Tunis, Tunisia
1Q 2009	3rd Global Forum	United Nations Headquarters, New York

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