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Blueprint on Inclusive Workplaces
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      >> Recording in progress.
      >> JAMES THURSTON: Yulia, feel free to put up the initial
slide.
      >> Sure.
      >> JAMES THURSTON: Welcome, everyone. We will wait a
minute just a moment while people enter the session. We will be
getting started in just a second.
      Why don't we get started. Good day. I'm James Thurston.
I'm a vice president with the Global Initiative for inclusive
ICTs or G3ict. We are an international, nonprofit organization
set up about 17 years ago with support of the United Nations,
specifically to focus on the inclusion and digital inclusion of
persons with disabilities around the world happy to be here.
      I am by way of descriptive introduction I'm a white male
with grayish air, I wear glasses. I'm wearing a blue shirt
today and I'm in my home office which is blurred in the
background but you can kind of make out art on the wall.
      I am really happy to be here in this session. We are doing
this session in conjunction with the Zero Project conference.
They are a great partner of ours and we are happy to be bringing
this conversation to that conference. And welcoming all of you
to that conference through this session.
      I am also really happy to say that this discussion that we
are having today on inclusive workplaces, and more specifically
a blueprint for inclusive workplaces and the role of community
in support of inclusive workplaces around the world, is part of
an ongoing collaboration between my organization, my nonprofit,
G3ict, and Steelcase, who has been a fantastic partner in this

work, as well as many other partners in the work as well. Steelcase came to us probably a bit over a year ago. Really wanting to play a role in shedding more light -- more of a spotlight on issues around inclusion in the workplace, pretty broadly as well. So, we have been tackling this issue together for over a year now. Along with many other leaders and partners for sure, and you will hear from some of them today as well.

So, with that, let me hand off to you, Kam, and maybe do an introduction of yourself and to Steelcase.

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Thank you, James. Hello, everyone, thank you for joining us today to talk about the blueprint on inclusive workplaces of the future. Again, my name is Kamara Sudberry. I also go by Kam. I am a leader of inclusive design here at Steelcase, where we are really on a journey, as James mentioned, to uplift the stories told to really design inclusive workplaces of the future.

For description's sake, I am a black woman with beige brown skin. I am wearing a -- or burgundy turtleneck, surrounded in my home office here in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on a -- I would say a rather cold morning. We are -- I have a gray background and also a window that my rather large head covers.

And again, at Steelcase we are really excited to continue this conversation. I really love a quote from our CEO, Sarah Armbruster that says building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace is a shared responsibility and one we must make -- all make continued progress on. And I think it's really important that we really lean into these collaborations and partnerships as an empowering way to really create and co-create workplaces of the future. So, thank you for having me, James.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Kam, thank you so much and to all of your colleagues there at Steelcase as well. I think one of the reasons why G3ict likes to partner with much larger organizations like Steelcase is the expertise and the commitment that you bring and the breadth -- the global breadth of talent that you bring to exploring and addressing these issues. We certainly appreciate that collaboration.

Right now I'm going to ask my colleague, Yulia, to put up a slide on, sort of, how we run these sessions. Some practices. And, Yulia, use this as an opportunity to introduce yourself. After this, we will ask you, the other speakers to introduce themselves and then we will start the conversation.

>> YULIA SARVIRO: Thank you, James. My name is Yulia Sarviro. I am a senior project manager at G3ict. And I work on a number of different projects, including this one. And I will start with describing myself. I am a white woman with blond, short hair. I am wearing violet dress today. And I am sitting with the blurred background in Tallinn, Estonia.

I would like to go over some of the session practices that we use today to make the experience more comprehensive and more attractive to everybody. So, this meeting is recorded. And it will be made available to the public. We are providing the CART, the closed captions. You can switch on the captions by clicking on the CC button in the menu. They are available in English. They are also available through the browser. And you can find the link in the chat.

We also provide international sign language interpretation, and you can pin the videos of our interpreters by right clicking on them.

We ask the panelists to keep the microphones muted unless you are speaking. And for the attendees, we would like you, in case you would like to ask a question to the panelists, please use Q&A box, Q&A section. And in the chat we encourage you to pause any other ideas, questions or if you have any technical issues. Our G3ict team is monitoring the chat and we will be here to help you to resolve those issues.

We are planning the Q&A session toward the end of the event today. But please feel free to post your questions during the discussion in the Q&A section.

And, finally, if there are any questions left or any comments you would like to make regarding this meeting, please send them to workplaces@G3ict.org. Thank you.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Yulia. And our other colleague, Bela, is monitoring the chat and questions as well and, therefore, any support you may need.

With that, let's move to introducing the rest of our great speakers today and discussants. Susan, would you like to go first?

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: My name is Susan Mazrui. I use the pronouns she and her. I am a middle-aged bi-racial woman who looks very white. And I work at AT&T in Global Public Policy. I work on issues related to disability and aging in play.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you, Susan, for joining us.

And Jim.

>> JIM LINK: Hello. Everyone, my name is Jim Link. I am a white male with a very gray beard sitting in my office in Alexandria, Virginia. In the background is the skyline and the Masonic Temple in the city. I use the personal pronouns of he, him and his. And I am currently the chief human resources officer for the Society for Human Resources Management, more commonly known as SHRM. SHRM is a nonprofit organization with about 320,000 members around the globe, focused on helping human resources professionals be better at their jobs and help to

build better businesses and better workplaces by our involvement.

I am excited to be here today. Even more excited to have been one of the original folks working on the global blueprint, and I am excited to engage in the discussion today.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Jim. And Shane.

>> SHANE KANADY: Hello, everybody. My name is Shane Kanady, and I am a senior fellow for G3ict. By way of visual introduction, I'm a white male with short black hair and beard and I'm wearing a sports coat and guitars in the background. I use the pronouns he and him. My role was to help design the research and engage with our expert partners, as well as contribute to the creation of the blueprint. I have worked in the disability community for over 20 years with a primary focus on employment, and my roles have included as researcher and policy advisor on the future of work and the related impacts on the global disability community. And I'm very pleased to be here and be part of this. Thank you.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Shane. And it's great to have you here as well, because you play such a big role as well here in a minute in the work of creating this blueprint which we will talk about. I think what you will see in the speakers and in the conversation and in the blueprint that we will be talking about, is what we know is we are focused on making advances on inclusion in the workplace and here we are speaking specifically of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace, which an important goal in just about every country in the world.

Different roles, different stakeholders are critical to success. And creating, designing and supporting and maintaining inclusive workplaces. And you will get those perspectives from human resources perspective, a technology perspective and others in the conversation today and that's certainly a cornerstone or blueprint we will talk about, which includes what I call go do or actions for each of these roles, which is equally important.

With that, I would like to start, Shane -- Susan, Shane, and Jim w a little bit of level setting about what we are -- and Kam, sorry. What we are talking about when we are talking about inclusive workplaces. Susan, maybe starting with you, can you get us started in, kind of, your perspective, your personal perspective, the AT&T perspective on what do we mean by an inclusive workplace?

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: I would define an inclusive workplace as one, when we are talking about disability, is one that is accessible, welcoming and equitable. I like to say it's awesome. It's important to have an environment first where

someone can do the work, get into the building, use the systems, have access to the same information that you need to do your job. You need to have an environment that is welcoming so that people feel like they are part of the team. There's nothing worse than that feeling of being the last person picked on the team or the person who is reluctantly allowed to join in or the person who is never asked to lead. A welcoming environment means that you consider each person as a person first and are interested in the talents and what they bring to the workplace and you're welcome to share those at all times. Equitable means you have equal opportunities to participate. An opportunity to gain the skills that you need to be competitive and an opportunity to shine. And I think that when we are looking at inclusion as a whole for people with disabilities, it's really looking at the same things that other people want in a workforce, but sometimes it takes a little more deliberate action to make these things happen.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you for starting us off, an inclusive workplace and how we achieved it. It's awesome. It's equitable is a good way to think about it as we get started. I'm wondering from your perspective and maybe from an even broader human resources perspective which is a critical role in creating -- well, sourcing and hiring and supporting employees with disabilities. How do you see -- or how do you define or describe an inclusive workplace and how do we know if we have achieved it?

>> JIM LINK: Thank you, James. Mine was a bit of an interesting role in the development of the blueprint. As I found myself representing two significant groups or stakeholder groups in those discovery sessions and in the eventual outcomes. Those two groups were the C-Suite, senior leaders in organizations both for profit, not for profit, as well as service organizations and philanthropies but also the human resources organization as a chief human resources officer, formerly in one of the largest human capital companies in the world.

What I found particularly interesting is I worked through this with my colleagues on the call, was the fact that this seemed to be in many organizations both large and small somewhat unchartered territory. So, my focus really became more centered around, first of all, making those groups, both the C-Suite and human resources team aware of the need for inclusivity. And I love the way Susan served it up, is part of -- as part of a total equitable business culture, that's exactly what we are trying to develop. And I found that there are really three ways you do that. First is awareness, and that's where I spent most of my time going forward. But also then on adaptability and

finally on adoption. It's my three As of what we need to do both in the C-Suite and in human resources to help really build a true and complete inclusive culture where everyone is welcome and able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Jim. And we look forward to hearing about more of that experience in the conversation this morning.

Kam, Steelcase's -- has an interesting role and I think an interesting perspective. You are a big employer so you are employing people with disabilities. But you also play a critical role in lots of workplaces around the world, of all kinds. I'm wondering how you personally and maybe Steelcase might describe or define what an inclusive workplace looks like and how do we know when we have achieved it or do we ever really fully achieve it?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Such a great question, James. You know, my title of inclusive designer, I work within our workplace innovation space and that's where we really get to start asking, you know, global audiences how the workplace is shaping up when we take that information and really try to create solutions and co-create solutions for the workplace that match those needs. And how we have begun to define inclusivity as the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources and can contribute fully. We have talked a lot throughout this process about, like, safe inclusive workplaces that are compelling for people to come to. And I think that really piggy backs off of Susan's statement of being awesome, right? Places that we want to be drawn to versus that mandate and feeling really, you know, assigned to be in a space. We want to be in that space.

And personally, as I have really started to lean into this inclusive design world and how we are trying to mobilize this throughout our organization. One quote that has constantly stuck with me is -- it comes from Kat Holmes, who is the author of "Mismatch," which talks about ask 100 people what inclusion means and you will get 100 different answers. But if you ask some what being excluded is, it will uniformly be when you are left out.

We sometimes can't always talk about what inclusive spaces are but we can identify the times where we feel left out or the points of exclusion. So, I think we are on that journey to learn what are those points where we are finding mismatches or finding exclusion and how do we achieve workplaces that really do live into that inclusive mindset.

And knowing that it's a destination. It's not -- it is a process. So, we have to really start mobilizing that not only

internally, but help our partners and our stakeholders do that as well.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Kam, thank you so much for that. And I appreciate you, sort of, inviting all of us to acknowledge that we are all on a journey today in terms of our workplaces and our organizations and how inclusive and accessible they are. And certainly, I think that's a strength, that recognition that Steelcase has brought to this work that we have completely really appreciated.

Before we go to my next question, I do want to mention -- I see that Darren Bates, good friend and colleague, has put a question in the Q&A. I invite our speakers to answer there. I will likely circle back to it in a minute.

Before I do, I want to ask the set of panelists, for a short yes or no and then expand on that. Have we achieved inclusive workplaces? And you can take that from whatever perspective you want, from your employer, why society in general, a specific geography. But have we achieved inclusion in the workplace? Again, thinking primarily of people with disabilities but certainly there are intersectionality issues involved in that as well.

And if we have or haven't, why or why not or how not? I'm assuming you're going to say no. But we do want you to answer the yes or no question. Susan, do you want to start again?

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: Yeah. I would say heck no. And you can change that a little bit. I think our workplaces reflect our society. And our society has not gotten to a point where we are fully inclusive of people with disabilities. I think sometimes it's because of unconscious bias. I think sometimes it's because of systemic biases. So, for example, when you're looking at standard of care in kneed institutions and you actually have to say, you can't discriminate based on disability. I think we have a long way to go. I think we are better off than we were prior because at least now more people think that discriminating against people with disabilities is wrong, which was certainly not true 50 years ago.

But we still have a long way to go because we are looking at the unemployment rate being exceptionally high. We are looking at the number -- you know, having to have hiring goals for people with disabilities. We have a ways to go.

The difference, I think, now is you have companies like Steelcase, you have organizations like SHRM, you have nonprofits like G3ict that are all working together to try to get to that point and to work on these issues.

I don't know that we will ever get there, because I don't know societies are ever fully equitable. But I think we can get a lot farther because we are working together.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Susan, for that. And at some point we will be having these conversations together in person again and I'm sure you'll be even more emphatic with your heck no. Look forward to that.

But I think you do raise important points about the collaborative effort. And I do -- I agree with what I think you're saying, too, is I feel like having worked in this field of accessibility and inclusion for 19 years, we are at a different spot than we were even five years ago. We are not there yet. But maybe we are not having to be the evangelist so much about the why of inclusion, and more working on how you achieve it, which is a better place to be --

(Overlapping speakers).

>> JAMES THURSTON: With a yes or no and why.

>> JIM LINK: Yeah. I would agree with Susan's emphatic no. But I'm going to qualify and say, no, but. And the qualifier there is I believe clearly there are signs of hope in this space. Whenever I look at, again, back to my three As of awareness, adapt ability and adoption, we are in phase one of that A, right? We are in the awareness phase. And right now that work around building more inclusive organizations and workplaces, societies even is very much a push strategy where those individuals and organizations like ours are working very much toward really pushing that agenda.

What I'm beginning to see, though, are signs of hope or that push agenda may turn, in fact, to a pull strategy from organizations, nonprofits and government entities as well. And that's really coming in some interesting forms and interesting places. Just recently I had a conversation from a board member of an -- of a publicly traded company who was interested in ESG metrics and reporting and that ESG metric and reporting for this individual was about disability and the inclusiveness of people who identify with disabilities into the workplace and was asking me about what measures organizations should, can and must have in place in the future in order to have an organization that truly is inclusive of the individuals that we are talking about.

So, I see this from foundations. I see this work from boards. I'm seeing it more and more now in responsible organizations beginning, and the key is beginning. We are not there yet. But beginning to ask the right questions about how we build those totally inclusive equitable cultures that we described in our opening segment.

So, yes, Susan is right. It's no, double dog no. But the real answer is, there are signs of hope. And that's where I'm going to build my cases for the future.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Good, thank you, Jim. And I love that perspective. And also, I think the really important point of

push versus pull and we are seeing more pull. I think we will talk in a minute with Yulia and Shane about the blueprint. I think that blueprint was developed in response to that demand to that poll, which is fantastic. And further in the conversation we will talk about communities support that poll as well and how we do that as a group.

Before we go there, Kam, you are on the hook now for an even more emphatic yes or no. Are we achieving inclusion in the workplace and why or why not?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Well, I definitely think I want to echo my fellow panelists and say we are not there yet. We have partners. We have people that we can identify in doing tremendous work and making waves. We are on this journey to better understanding rethinking our old assumptions and co-creating new. I think -- and it honestly makes me think about how we are still really getting over this cubicle, you know, idea of the office, right, of the workplace and having -- I sometimes quote as the sea of the same, right? Everyone gets the same desk, same space to work out of. And what's really been an opportunity is leaning into this hybrid reality that we are in. We are coming on this phone call from all parts of the world and being able to contribute and provide our knowledge. And we have, you know, really just created a space here, right? So, we have to make that be felt also in the real world and the built environment and in the workplace.

And I think we are learning -- coming together, it takes the co-creation. Because all of us have a stake in the workplaces that we are a part of each day. And if we don't feel safe to contribute and really empowered in those places, then it's a disservice not only to ourselves, but to the organizations that we say we want to impact and make a positive impact there.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Kam. And I like the term the sea of the same. And I think whether we are coming from workplaces from the digital perspective which I am and Susan is, or the Built Environment, which maybe Steelcase is more, and SHRM from all perspectives in terms of employment of people with disabilities, that sea of the same becomes a challenge, but also I think an opportunity if we are able to think a bit more creatively, if we, sort of, avoid that uniform sea of the same, we, actually, create workplaces and other environments that are really more productive and beneficial for everyone.

So, before we move on to Shane and Yulia, there are a couple of questions I do want to read and invite or panelists to chime in on. Darren Bates and asked, the pandemic has increased the number of disabled people in the labor force. How can

workplaces adapt to significant increases in both the disabled population and disabled workforce. And Shane, I may ask you to chime in on this as well because I know you do a lot of work in this space.

Susan, any answers to the question including the pandemic?

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: I think disruption gives opportunities to change. And I think the pandemic has shown one thing to I think most businesses, which is the more flexible and agile you can be, the better you can be as a company overall in uncertain times.

I think that companies that were already supporting their employees with disabilities who have autoimmune conditions or who are unable to go to a physical work environment were much better prepared to make the adjustment to a larger number of people who are working virtually and certainly more equitable adjustment.

I think that the pandemic has helped with an understanding of mental health issues and disabilities related to mental health. Because so many more people have the experience of depression or anxiety related to the pandemic, that I think it's been an opportunity and I think companies like AT&T and Steelcase and others I'm sure have taken advantage of that as an opportunity for learning. A natural opportunity to say, hey, we are in this together. We all have challenges. Some of these challenges result in disabilities. We have tools. We have things that can help and we would need to stamp out the stigma.

So, I think it's been -- as difficult as it's been, I think it's also been an incredible learning opportunities and for companies that are interested in equity and interested in their employees, they have taken it as a learning.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Susan, thank you so much. And I like that perspective of that these kinds of crises or emergencies are -- and this kind of disruption could be opportunities if we take advantage of it. I know one of our good friends and colleagues, probably known to many of you, Karen Tamley, said at the beginning of the pandemic that these kinds of disruptions, emergencies, crises, make more apparent those things that we already know. And we know that workplaces are not inclusive.

Shane, I know -- Darren, thank you for asking this question. Shane I think is doing really leading edge work on the topic of acquired disability and the impacts of that and the opportunities to be prepared for that. Shane, would you like to chime in on this question?

>> SHANE KANADY: Sure, I would love to. And just very briefly, we gave a talk on this during one of the fireside chats yesterday around data and acquired disabilities due to natural and man-made disasters and this is an area that G3ict is

currently exploring. It's complimentary to a lot of the disaster risk reduction work that's being done throughout the world. And it's very relevant to this conversation because the ability for us, globally, to recognize trends and acquired disability and how that relates to the size and the diversity of the disability community, we have to be able to conceptualize that to understand that before we can plan for it, before we can respond to it, and it goes from international to regional to a national perspective, let alone to the industry level where we are talking about the effects on the workplace.

So, I think there's much work to be done to explore this topic which is a complicated topic in and of itself. But absolutely, there is a direct effect on workplaces, on the inclusion of the workforce, and on the trends that we see over time in terms of unemployment and poverty and those sorts of things. They are all interrelated and they are all very important to this conversation.

>> JIM LINK: James, can I add on?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Absolutely.

>> JIM LINK: I am just chomping at the bit here. Actually, what I believe -- when we look at the impact of what we have all gone through as a global society in the last couple of years, one of the greatest impacts will not only be on safety, health, mental wellness and those issues, but I think it's going to be much more large and more discernible in that I believe what the pandemic has created is actually a new social contract between employee and employer for the future.

And the great thing to echo what Susan was saying, is now we get to define what that social contract might be. So, there's never been a better time to ensure that it is an inclusive, equitable culture that is required in that new employee/employer social contract for the future.

So, I am trying to figure out how to navigate that in such a way as to make it the standard by which we need to think about that relationship in the future. Now, I do not have all of those pillars built and all the wheels on the bus just yet. But I do know that work in organizations like G3ict are going to be extremely important to help build that social contract and we ought to be grasping it, understanding it and pushing it forward as part of that social contract for the future.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Jim, thank you so much. And before I go into Betty's question, Kam, would you like to jump in on this pandemic-related question?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Sure, James. And maybe I will take a broader approach of how we shifted really into hybrid model. I know what we are talking about at Steelcase is really that equity, ease and engagement should be type of priority as

organizations are moving into these hybrid situations where we
have people coming in, working across the globe, being zoomed
into a camera. And though we were doing this before the
pandemic, again, now these times of empathy that we are all
experiencing and we are understanding the challenges with that
and we want to really encourage anyone who is coming to us as a
thought partner to understand equity at the helm of that, right?
And I think that's where we start to understand both as we adapt
to the significant increase that is a wonderful increase, I
think we also need to realize that accommodations are going to
be something that should be shared across the board, right?

Accommodations are something that is natural. And as we
move into this hybrid world, we have to really hear and listen
what people need, make sure that they have the ease of
technology and utilizing technology or spaces and adapting
spaces to their needs.

So, as we are really starting to talk about, I would say,
share our broader research that we have been doing over the past
years, you will be equity engagement being top of mind as well
as choice and control, right, because people need to have
options. They need to have the technology that -- at their
fingertips that makes them do their best work.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Kam, thank you so much for, I think
painting a nice picture as well of, sort of, where we could and
should be in terms of workplaces. And it sounds really great.

Darren, thank you for that question. I do want to ask a
question from Betty Najjemba working with the African Disability
Forum in Uganda. Her question is, how do you ensure that all
categories of persons with disabilities are catered for in the
work setting? Any policies specifically addressing issues of
employees with disabilities in your respective workplaces?

Susan, would you like to --

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: Sure. There are several approaches that
we take. One is to look at the basic technology that we are
using. For example, with the technology we are using right now,
can you pin a square for captioning or for sign language
interpreting, that type of thing. So provide the tools that are
accessible.

And another is providing accommodations, which as Kam said,
really accommodations with productivity tools. We are calling
them accommodations because we are talking about disability.
But we are really talking about accommodating individual needs,
whether it's disability related or not.

Another thing is a policy of providing and sharing
materials that are accessible. So, making sure that there's the
understanding and this comes from both HR and leadership and

middle management, that we will be accessible. We will find the ways to make things work.

So, I think that each company does it a little bit differently but there's always components of built-in accessibility, accommodations for specialized needs, for example, interpreters or Braille or something like that where you might not have as many people. And then the overall expectation that we should be providing equal access and effective communications.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Susan. Jim or Kam, would you like to respond to Betty's question?

>> JIM LINK: I certainly would like to add onto the answer provided by Susan. When I think about how to do this the best way, in my view there are three groups or three topics that are imperative. The first is the talent or the employees who already exist in your organization. So, they need to help establish the standard and the expectation that an inclusive culture is expected and needed in order for everyone to be the most successful. So, there's the employees.

The second group and the one where I spend the most time obviously is in the leadership space. By clearly stating the intent of the organization, leaders have that capability to drive action in their respective organizations through what they say and then the role-modeling they put into place around those items.

And then the third group and Susan mentioned this quickly, is really the whole world of technology, right? Technology, in my mind, can be the great equalizer when it comes to building inclusivity. If you have the right employees with the right expectations, you have leaders setting those expectations and Roland modeling and then you have the tech to enable those things to become reality. That's the perfect groups there to pull that off.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Much of our work in this space including all the speakers and some others in the audience as well has involved these different roles. I think it's great, Jim, you are thinking about acting on it with that in mind.

Kam, would you like to, before we head into the next section, would you like to respond to Betty's question?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Sure. I think what really stands out about Betty's question, she is talking about all categories, right, of persons with disabilities. And I think it's important to always take a step back, right, and that we have this language that sometimes lumps people under a shared experience and a shared identity but there still have unique identities embedded with that. We have to honor that uniqueness, recognize that uniqueness, recognize the difference. I love the push of

the neurodiversity movement, right, the idea that all of our brains are different. And there's nothing unnormal about that. If anything, we start embracing those changes and those differences, how better of a place we would be and, kind of, back to the earlier point, more accommodating for everyone.

So, I just think continue to recognize that workplaces of the future have to be those places where folks can come from many different backgrounds and many different identities and be honored and respected and empowered, I think is one way. And affirmed, right? So, no one trying to change that or bring different language. How I choose to describe myself and identify is how I should be honored. And I think that's one place people can start. But there's a lot of work to do.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Kam. And thank you, Jim and Susan and Shane as well.

I think we have an up-to-date and current picture of where, at least from our perspectives we are today when it comes to inclusion in the workplace for employees with disabilities.

What we'd like to do next is give you a bit of a sense of some of the work we have been doing collectively around this topic of inclusion in the workplace and here I will ask my G3ict colleagues, Yulia and Shane, to talk through the process and the outputs for this blueprint that we have been mentioning. If you haven't seen it, we will also post links to it in the chat. It's an incredibly powerful resource, I think, and really the jumping-off point for how we move forward together as a community to support more inclusive workplaces.

So, with that, Yulia, if you could maybe talk us through some of the interesting survey data that was part of that project.

>> YULIA SARVIRO: Thank you, James. Do you see the slides?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Yes, we do.

>> YULIA SARVIRO: Perfect. I will make the brief overview of the survey that we made last year prior to creating the blueprint itself and to inform the blueprint in some way.

So, we were asking the questions mostly to employees and the managers of the organizations around the world. We had almost 400 respondents from 28 countries of the world. And we were asking a set of questions. And the first one was about whether they believed that the workplaces are inclusive, safe and compelling.

And as you can see here, many of the participants of the survey believed that the workplaces are pretty safe. And they are rather compelling but they are less inclusive.

The next question was pretty much the same question, but we looked at how the persons with disabilities replied to the question about the inclusiveness of the workplace. And as you

can see here, they are more concerned about the inclusivity of the workplaces than persons without disabilities. Almost 50% of persons with disabilities don't really believe that the workplaces are inclusive.

We were also asking about the essential elements, what actually means the workplace inclusive. And here you can see on the slide the top three selections of all respondents and top three selections of those with disabilities. And even though they have chosen the first top three are pretty much the same, but the weight that they give to any of them is different. So, if among all of the respondents the first selection was representation and diversity across all functions and levels. For persons with disabilities, the first one is accessible products, technology and systems. Perhaps because it allows them to be productive on the workplace.

The second selection in the accessible products, technology and systems for all the respondents, and the third one is accessible physical space. Persons with disabilities with accessible physical space on the second place, while the representation and diversity across the functions and levels is the third.

The primary outcomes of an inclusive workplace, what it actually gives to, what is the benefit. And here we have the top three selections from all the respondents are increased employee satisfaction with very high response rate. 80% of respondents identified this one as the first choice.

The second one is increased innovation. And the third one is increased productivity, individual and in teams.

For the respondents with disabilities, increased employee satisfaction is also on the first place. And also 80% of respondents chose this one.

While the increased productivity is the second. And the third one is improved products and services.

We also have been asking who in the view of our respondents is responsible for creating an inclusive workplace. Probably no surprise that the vast majority of respondents selected senior leadership as the choice number 1.

The second one is human resources. The third one is mid-level management. And only on the fourth place, all the rest of the employees.

The information technology, vendors and suppliers, customers and all the other options are -- have less voices than any of the proposed first four.

And finally, we were wondering how interested the year respondents are in participating in the process of creating inclusive workplaces, how engaged they are or want to be. And as we can see here, the 25%, a quarter of all the respondents

are already engaged in the process. While 27% are interested and prepared to engage. They want to engage.

     At the same time, 25% indicated that they are interested, but they are unprepared. And they need the expert support. And the rest of the responses were 11.5% very interested and prepared to make this a priority. And some are slightly interested or uninterested at all because inclusion is not a priority for this particular person or for the organization.

     James, this is all.

     >> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Yulia. And before we go to Shane to speak next about the blueprint, I think these last two slides, the last two findings about the roles that are critical to inclusion in the workplace and the interest in readiness across different roles and sectors and geographies in supporting inclusion of the workplace are really pretty interesting and are a good, I think, bridge ultimately to the blueprint itself, which Shane will talk us through.

     Before we do that, Yulia, I know you have been working on accessibility and inclusion from a technology perspective for many years, including in the workplace. Was there anything in the survey that you found surprising as we did the project?

     >> YULIA SARVIRO: Yes, one of the slides that I showed before, that showed the discrepancies between what is the top three priorities for all the respondents and what are the top three priorities for persons with disabilities. And it is interesting that quite often we assume what is important for somebody else. And this brings us, as always, to the motto nothing about us without us, because only persons with disabilities know what is actually a priority. And it is critically important to engage persons with disabilities, employees with disabilities into the discussion from the very beginning. And that is why it is so inspiring that at least 25% of people of the respondents are already engaged in these activities and another 25% are very interested and are looking for help and guidance here.

     >> JAMES THURSTON: It's a great observation, Yulia, and really, I think, also supports an important concept here when we are thinking about inclusive workplaces, which is that inclusion and accessibility, it's not a yes/no, black/white or checked box sort of thing. That the range of humanity and ability is large and that we need to be thinking about that when we are thinking about workplaces as well.

     So, Shane, it would be great if you could talk us through what came next, which is the blueprint and the process for developing that blueprint, because that is also, I think, a bridge to where we all collectively want to be headed moving forward. Shane, who is one of our senior fellows, led the work

on the process for creating this blueprint and the output itself and we are all incredibly thankful to Shane for that leadership.

>> SHANE KANADY: Thank you, James. I appreciate that. So, yes, I would love to walk through the process that we followed and what resulted from this work and hopefully that helps to demonstrate just how impactful this resource can be for many stakeholders.

So, for this project we applied an inclusive human centered design approach that we view self flee for in-depth multishareholder initiatives and other domains. We decided to take this approach because it would be the most engaging way to tackle this complicated topic and we did so in a fully virtual environment while maintaining a strict adherence to accessibility, did provide unique challenges and we are grateful for all those who participated, but we do think the output of this project is well worth that effort.

A few points on the process. Working with our partners at Steelcase, we first defined the scope of the project to include the problem statement, clear definitions of the terms we were using such as inclusive, safe and compelling. Vision for the output, which became the blueprint. Together we identify a core group of experts from a range of industries and this group is intentionally diverse and inclusive. Each member of the group far surpassed our high expectations that we had when we invited them. Global experts, several of them with us today for this conversation, were invited to take parts in three round table sessions and they followed an iterative process to better define the problem space, identify key stakeholder groups that have significant influence on whether workplaces are inclusive, safe exam compelling and understanding and capture the relationship between those stakeholder groups, essentially, the what, who and how.

Each session was built on an activity designed to challenge our experts and encourage constructive debate about important and complicated topics. And rather than use one of the co-designed products that are on the market which we found did not meet our accessibility requirements, we adopted a straightforward approach of tables with prompts and structured conversations with a lead Moderator and a note taker.

In between the sessions the inputs were analyzed and then turned into graphical maps, that represent the relationship in themes, stakeholders and the actions that those stakeholders can take to create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. And those -- the outputs of each session were shared with the group to encourage additional input.

We took a few additional steps outside that process to include background research, the global survey that Yulia

discussed and supplemental interviews with experts that could help us fill in any of the gaps that we had.

That was the process. Now I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the blueprint itself. So the vision for the blueprint was to create a comprehensive but engaging resource that would appeal to many stakeholder groups and provide them with a short list of practical actions that are well within their control and could be taken in many cases today. The bulk of the blueprint is divided into sections on background search, global survey outcomes, design roundtables, recommended actions and finally a call to action the background research section provides context for the global state of workplace inclusion much of which we have talked about in some of our opening comments and in this case specific to persons with disabilities as attendees of this conference you likely recognize the long standing disparities in workforce inclusion between persons with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. You likely also recognize that the disability community one homogenous group and the intersectional identities within the community globally and in experience of unemployment and poverty felt throughout the globe by those groups is not uniquely distributed.

People with intersectional identities, persons of color with disabilities feel this differently than others, as an example, given the timing of this work we could not overlook the significant impact of the pandemic on workers and workplaces, the background research speaks to this.

One of the most interesting aspects of this is how the perspectives on that topic continued to adapt based on the changing global health situation as we are doing the project. The majority of our work occurred before the delta and omicron variants, which then further disrupted workplaces across the world and reinforced the value, we believe, of this project. So, that was the background research.

The next section of the blueprint are the results of the global survey the G3ict team, Steelcase conducted specifically for this project. And Yulia covered the details and the findings from that survey, but I do want to reiterate our thanks to the ILO, to SHRM, WITSA and Workability International for their support with distributing this survey.

That brings us, then, to the outputs of our three human-centered design roundtable sessions. So, I'd like to spend a bit of time describing each, which resulted in a map that is used, textual information building to a set of actions.

The first map that we produced was a concept map. And the purpose of that activity was to identify and categorize the forces that impact how workplaces can be inclusive, safe and

compelling. The map produced by the group places persons with disabilities as the central focus surrounded by four major themes, which are workplace culture, design, technology and policies and management. These themes and the detailed list of inputs provided by our group of experts created the initial landscape of opportunities and challenges. So, we then built from that to identify who has influence over those.

That led us to this stakeholder mapping activity. And the purpose there was to refine the inputs received through the global survey on who has critical roles within the workplace to really understand where do we want to focus our attention on coming up with a list of actions. What are the high leverage stakeholder groups within the workplace that lead to whether a workplace is inclusive, safe and compelling.

Once we decided on the list of stakeholder groups, we went on to document what each group offers, what they need in order to fulfill their roles and any dependencies between the groups. The resulting map depicts 14 unique stakeholders that are grouped based on commonalities in their role. The first group are those directly impacted by the workplace. So employees and employee resource groups, which act in a lot of ways as representatives representing the voice.

The second group includes essential functions within any organization, which would be human resources, information technology, legal, mid-level management, procurement and senior leadership.

The third group contains external parties that benefit from the outputs of an inclusive, safe and compelling workplace, those would be customers and the broader community and the geographies surrounding those organizations.

And the fourth group includes external partners that contribute to how workplaces look, feel and function. So that includes designers and architects, facility managers, occupational health and safety, and vendors and suppliers.

The final map that we produced was an ecosystem map and this was the most complicated because it really represented dynamics and behaviors between these groups. And what we set out to depict in that map were the interdependencies between stakeholders and the most important actions that they can take in relationship to each other to create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

So, for this activity, we adapted the framework of systems mapping to provide a visual reference for the narrative that describes the following stakeholder actions. And the section that came after the maps. But essentially identifying cause and effect.

The map also shows which stakeholders have a larger impact on the dynamics of the ecosystem based on the number of interactions that tied back to their role. For example, we see that senior leadership of organizations represent a key point of intersection between most, if not all stakeholders. So, the decisions that they make, the actions that they take certainly have an influence and effect on all of your stakeholders.

The map is divided into two parts. The first of which depicts the interactions inside of organizations. And the second are interactions that happen between organizations and external parties.

So, each of these maps that we have described builds to the final section of the blueprint, which is dedicated to providing a more detailed narrative description of each stakeholder group, the interactions represented in the map, recommended actions that each group should pay and examples of bright spots. Examples of great practices that are occurring out there that are reference points that people can look to for further guidance, inspiration and really compel action.

So, this last section is the actionable part of the blueprint where we wanted to look at practical steps. And the combination of the actions that are represented in this section, if these stakeholders carried out some of the things that are suggested, would then be predictive of creating inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

So, a few examples of the suggested actions. We found that employees as a stakeholder group should inform all other stakeholder groups by providing insights on the lived experience of persons with disabilities and intersectional identities either directly or through the work of employee resource groups. Senior leaders, an action they should take is prioritize inclusion and include this principle on the agenda for their boards of directors. For designers and architects we action they should take is learn about the needs and expectations of diverse employee groups who explicit outreach and inclusion actions and seek out those perspectives throughout the design process, essentially.

And for occupational health and safety, an action that we suggested is to adapt a different focus. Shift the focus of the industry away from a medicalized model of disability and towards a social and bright space oriented. There are many additional great examples that stress accessibility of the digital and Built Environment, inclusive co-design and emphasis on pursuing outcomes that surpass the minimum standards of regulatory requirements.

The blueprint concludes with a call to action for interested parties to join our inclusive workplaces task force

and our community of practice, which is what we are highlighting here today. Thank you, James.

     >> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Shane. And the human centered design process that you led our group of experts and around the world for the global project helped lead us to this position where we could define actions. I think the entire group that included Susan and Jim here today and I'll ask each of them to weigh in on the blueprint and the process if they want. But that mapping process and that design process that you set up led us to the ability to be more action oriented in the blueprint which is what we are all after. I think it's interesting these roles which we will talk about in much more detail in a minute, we ended up putting 14 different roles or stakeholders in the blueprint document and it included the ones that you mentioned but interestingly to me, I think it also included and importantly I think when we are talking about inclusion in the workplace, it also included your vendors, your supply chain. They have an important role to play in inclusion of the workplace. And even your customers if you're a business and even government employers have customers as well. There really is a role for everyone and they are all well defined in the blueprints. So thank you for walking us through that, Shane.

     And, Susan and Jim, Susan, maybe first, anything you would like to say about the previous project that led us to the blueprint and we will talk about roles in a second.

     >> SUSAN MAZRUI: I think (?) was good in getting voices from a lot of different places. I think one of the things that we tend to do in work is to talk in echo chambers. So, I think this -- the approach that was taken from G3ict and the guidance with Steelcase is really -- has really made it something where all the different players were engaged, had an tonight weigh in and I think it delivered a better outcome. And I think the fact that the outcome was action oriented is absolutely critical. Because I think most people realize we have a ways to go. Getting there can be much more of a challenge.

     >> JAMES THURSTON: Yeah. Jim, anything you would like to add before we start to talk about the roles?

     >> JIM LINK: For those of you who were listening to Shane, you were probably sitting there thinking, oh, my goodness, that's a lot of work. I'll relay it out there by James and Shane and that's absolutely right. This is a comprehensive overview of how to build inclusivity at arguably the most comprehensive one I have encountered in the course of my career.

     My advice to those of you who are listening is to not let that scare you because while it is comprehensive it is systematic and purposeful and it's broken out in such a way that

you can go to your individual stakeholders in your organizations or yourself as a stakeholder and focus. What I did was focused on the three key words, safe, compelling and inclusive. And when you use those three words in describing this work to any stakeholder group, which I have come into contact at least one, if not all of those three components resonates with them.

So, don't be afraid of the comprehensiveness and the totality of this document. Instead, grasp those pieces of it and I am sure that you will find the ability to help move this forward in your own role.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Great. Thank you, Jim. Before we go on, I want to remind participants, feel free to put your questions into chat. And Yulia, I think you mentioned we may have a raised hand to ask a question?

>> YULIA SARVIRO: Yes, we have Ingrid Pammer raised hand for quite a long time. Do you want me to -- not anymore.

>> JAMES THURSTON: If you have a question, feel free to type it in the question and answer or if you're more comfortable speaking the question, raise your hand and Yulia will be able to see that.

Great. What I'd like to do now is move into, kind of, a deeper discussion of these roles because they are all critical to inclusion in the workplace and we have talked about how we are not necessarily achieving that and that there are challenges around achieving inclusion in the workplace.

And, again, I will, sort of, do a bit of a round robin with Susan and Kam and Jim. Starting with the fact that the blueprint, it points to these 14 different roles and stakeholders that all play -- have an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to inclusion in the workplace.

Susan, are they -- are each of these roles equally important or some more important? Jim touched on that a little bit -- I forgot the exact word you used. I'm wondering from your perspective, are they all equally important? Are some more important at different points in time? How should we be looking at these 14 different stakeholders and roles and working with them in a way that's productive?

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: I think there's differences in different companies. And companies are moved by different things, sometimes it's leadership, sometimes it's compliance, sometimes it's marketing. You have to take these roles and look at how it fits within your organization. I think there's some critical things to start with. I think leadership definitely has to say this is a priority. I think that your IT systems and your HR systems have to be effective if they can't function in your environment, if they can't get in the building, they are not going to have a successful outcome. Assuming you have those

things in place. I think middle management, the employees as a whole play a big role. And I think that investing in their abilities to be good allies to understand the importance, to be supportive is also very critical. But I think it really depends on where you are in the maturity model. But I think that what's outlined here in the blueprint is an excellent way to assess where you are within the organization and where you need to focus your work.

        >> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Susan. And I like the mention of assessment and maturity model because as I mentioned, I feel like we are all in this place now where we are wanting to make progress. We are not evangelizing the problem anymore and tools like assessments and blueprints help us drive that progress with willing partners.

        Jim, from your perspective, being in the human resources sector for a long time, now relatively newly there at SHRM, how do you see these roles and are there some that are critically important at different times? Are they all equally important? How does someone with an interest in this topic of inclusion in the workplace think about engaging these roles?

        >> JIM LINK: Yeah. I think of it on a very, very basic level. And maybe even not necessarily looking at each one of the independent stakeholder groups that we identified, but, rather, on its core level, in every organization I've ever been associated with, there are enablers and they are disablers. And you have to figure out who those two groups are. And it may be anyone within those stakeholder groups that we talked about.

        In some organizations it's very, very clear that the safety and health organization is strong, for example, whereas the policy and procedural people might be not necessarily weak. So -- or might be necessarily weak. And there are multiple examples of how those stakeholders work together.

        I would find amongst those stakeholder groups the ones who are those enablers and I would focus my attention on those first. I think it's some combination of what we already talked about. It's some combination of the technologist, of the leadership team and the talented people who may be amongst those stakeholder groups. And may not necessarily be at the top of those stakeholder groups, who are going to be those enablers who are going to help move that forward.

        So, I know I spend a lot of time in trying to figure out the human beings that need to help me drive something forward in an organization. And I spend more time on trying to figure out who those people are than what necessary stakeholder group they might belong to. To me it's all about the human factor and the human element. So I would clearly spend time and energy on

ensuring you had the right team, hopefully, inclusive of those stakeholder groups we described.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you, Jim. Kam, briefly, before we go to you, finding those leaders and all levels in each of these stakeholder roles is really important. I want to share related to that we have done work in the past with the University of Massachusetts, which is a big educational institution here in the United States where I am based. But also an enormous employer including people with disabilities.

As we were working with the university, their CIO, which is himself not necessarily an accessibility and inclusion expert. He's the CIO of a major organization and employer. He pointed out the challenge of identifying what he called pockets of heroic effort. There's always one person in a department or a role who is doing amazing things. But how do you scale that, in the role of the employer in both finding those -- and I love the term pockets of heroic effort on inclusion and scaling it, which is a big challenge.

So, Kam, before we go on to the next question, I do want to touch base with you on this, of that, sort of, breadth of roles in stakeholders. I know when Steelcase first came to us and wanted to be engaged as partners and with other partners on this topic of inclusion in the workplace, I think you had a vision of -- already that there were multiplicity of key stakeholders. So, I'm wondering how any thoughts on how we look across these -- in our blueprint anyways, these 14 different stakeholders?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Yes. Thank you, James. And I think what's really awesome about the blueprints, this we list out that shared responsibility that we were talking about a little bit earlier. And my background is more engaged in diversity, equity, inclusion efforts tied to HR issues. And oftentimes I think those folks who are putting on that heroic effort and really, you know, trying to advocate and identify points for progress or points to really to mobilize change, and sometimes it feels like the weight is on their shoulders, right? Like, they are tasked with changing an organization. And I love that this blueprint provides that ecosystem that surrounds these issues, right? It takes all of us coming together, creating spaces to talk about it, to talk through those pain points and exclusion and find points that are shared.

Back to Yulia's point, we have to ensure that folks are most impacted by our ideas and our designs and our policies are included in that discussion and that decision making.

I love what we talk about at Steelcase about designing with, not for. And I think that can be applied to any of these positions, any of these decisionmakers, is that you have to take stock in the experience of others. And I think that this

blueprint really provides those action steps, right, to say, whenever someone maybe turns to you and says, what are you doing about it, it's like, well, I have also ideas of what you can do about it, too, so also trying to really bridge those gaps that exist and really share that story of shared responsibility and provide avenues for people to enter the conversation.

That's what I really, really love about what this work -- where we are headed in this work.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Kam, thank you so much for that broader vision of how we approach this. And the ongoing commitment of Steelcase and you in particular to this work, we appreciate.

Before we go on to, sort of, looking forward, we have a question from Darren that I want to ask and it's very much related to the next question I wanted to ask, which is, sort of, where are we seeing some good practices? We always want to be shouting from the mountain tops about good practices and helping other employers replicate those good practices.

Darren Bates asked the question, and I will ask each of you to respond to this and if you want to add on other good practices that you want to mention, that would be great. But Darren asked, relative to advancing accessibility and disability inclusion in the marketplace and supply chain, how important is it to expressly include accessibility in your procurement process as an employer? And Susan, I see you smiling so I'm going to go to you. This is a question I think Darren knows I love any question related to supply chains and procurement when it comes to inclusion.

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: I'm going to point back to G3ict and the work they have done around procurement and inclusion. I think it's absolutely critical. What happens is that those who are developing technologies believe that it's not important to necessarily make them accessible unless companies are asking for it. If you didn't need this feature -- I mean, if you didn't -- if you need this feature, wouldn't you include it in your contract? Absolutely. When you're doing your request for proposals or RFIs to include accessibility language because there's no push on the product side or the vendor side to do that unless you ask for it. So it's absolutely critical.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Susan. Jim, would you like to chime in on that one?

>> JIM LINK: Yeah. The question of where that we are seeing good practices now, I'm going to answer it broadly. I think that in professional services organizations, you know, where many times the product is the people doing the work, I think that they are generally moving into the direction of accessibility and inclusivity in a way that's much faster than many of their compadres in other industries.

I would like to see more progress in things like traditional manufacturing, in the logistics space. Those are places where I would like to see more progress. And this is one of those places where we can have all of the government and regulatory standards in the world that we want and it's not going to have the impact that we as individuals pushing this initiative forward can have.

So, absolutely, I see signs of life out there in particular industries. And I want to see more in others. But, again, the good news is, the right questions are starting to come into organizations like G3ict, like SHRM, like other broader civic and philanthropic organizations who have a mindset towards inclusivity. The right questions are starting to be asked and that to me is helpful and a sign of progress. So I am all about the future and what's coming and our role in shaping and informing that is going to be critical.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Jim.

Kam, before we move on to, sort of, more forward looking, any thoughts on either Darren's request about supply chain and procurement in support of inclusive workplaces or about good practices in general?

>> KAMARA SUDBERRY: I think I just want to echo what Jim and Susan have already said, is really asking the question. That perspective, that thought, that priority cannot be actualized if it's not said. So, I think sometimes folks have a fear of saying the wrong thing or not being fully informed in order to put it on the table. But I really want to encourage anyone who is participating or looking for ways to really put it on the table. Put it as part of the agenda of what are you doing around inclusive? Will this meet the needs of all users? And really get perspective on that. I think that's something that we are accepting that challenge and we want others to feel empowered to ask that of their vendors and their partners as well.

So, we think this partnership here is one that we are excited to talk about and share with others, which is why the blueprint is available online and, you know, shared among our competitors and partners and everyone in between. We really want to share this learning because we know we are on a journey and we know people need to feel empowered to do this work.

So, yeah, just put it on the table.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Kam. And I think it's great to hear that perspective from Steelcase. I think one, because you are a major employer around the world, and you are managing important supply chains. But you are as we all know an important part of the supply chain. You are a supplier to so many employers. And having employer -- having vendors

that have this understanding of -- and commitment to inclusion and accessibility throughout the supply chain, whether it's the Built Environment, design or technology is critically important. So, it's great to hear all of your perspectives on that.

So, I may ask my colleague Yulia, which -- we have a great resource at G3ict and, Yulia, maybe you can share this, of 12 or 13 questions you should be asking all of your vendors about accessibility and inclusion. And, importantly, what are the responses you should be hearing from them and if you're not hearing the right responses, you may want to ask some tougher questions we will try to share that with you as well.

Moving forward the blueprint was the launching pad for a discussion that we have started across sectors and geographies at G3ict in partnership with Steelcase and others about the role of community and networks and supporting these 14 roles and stakeholders so that we are not all in this alone and I'd like to ask a question of questions about that.

But before I do, I would like to ask my colleague, Lourdes, who is helping me manage and drive this production to introduce herself. Some of you may be interacting with her as we move forward. Lourdes.

>> LOURDES ARREOLA PRADO: Thanks, James. Thanks, everyone. This has been a great session. Always learning from this topic because, as you mentioned, inclusion and accessibility is not black and white, James. So, we all need super from all. That's why I am happy to collaborate. I'm Lourdes areola, based in Mexico, I work for IAAP I have been -- inclusivity projects for the last 10 years. May background is as an engineer. I am a Mexican woman with white hair. And behind me, there's my -- some books, library here in the house. I am wearing a blue sweater. And I am hoping to contact you, yes, as James mentioned, about what are the next steps for this project, right? Because now we know that there's interdependence between the areas and could be like the key to really ignite this change, right? To really explore other ways to build a more inclusive and accessible work for all of us. Thanks, James.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Lourdes. I would like to as we are getting close to time here and, again, please anyone with questions, add them to the Q&A. But for our speakers and panelists, specifically, we have talked about the challenges and we have talked about the stakeholders. As we are looking forward and thinking about supporting greater progress, can we achieve more -- or how can we achieve, maybe, more inclusive workplaces through collaboration and community? What is the role of collaboration and community in this work so that we are all not necessarily islands, kind of -- or these pockets

of heroic effort on our own? Susan, I think you're smiling so I
will ask you to jump in.
     >> SUSAN MAZRUI: I think when you're in a pocket of heroic
effort it's often lonely.
     >> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you.
     >> SUSAN MAZRUI: I think the blueprint shows us the
advantage of having people work together. I mean, this is a
good start for outlining what needs to be done. How to do it,
though, really does, I think, require a community of practice.
Because there are very specific issues under each of the pillars
that you're looking at, you know, and specific to HR or specific
to IT. And having an opportunity to learn from others and then
to work together to do the next level where there's still some
unknown, so we are not repeating mistakes. We are repeating
things we know to work and we are working together to take that
next step to explore and get to where we need to be.
     So, I think that the community practice is going to be
critical because you think there are so many things we have
already learned and so many more things we need to learn and we
learned it more quickly and we do it better if we are working
together.
     >> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Susan, for that.
     Jim.
     >> JIM LINK: Yeah, the key for me is finding like minded
partners and those partners take on all different shapes, forms
and sizes. They are people high in organizations and at the
grassroots level in organizations. But they all are united in a
common spirit of trying to move and progress something forward.
In this case that idea of finding those like minded colleagues,
all it takes is two people to make a team, just two and from
there, I think these initiatives tend to grow. And you're
right, I mean, being on an island alone as a pocket of heroic
effort is exhausting, honestly.
     So, when you find those collaborative partners and those
collaborative efforts, they will combine to help you move
something forward. And my view is, it's often those informal
leaders in organizations, so people who don't have a leadership
title, that are the most passionate and the most committed to
make something happen. And strangely enough those people are
often incredibly easily identifiable, right? They surround
themselves -- people are natural drawn to them. I would suggest
that you find those individuals in organizations to help move
this initiative forward and when you have like minded people
moving toward a common goal, anything is possible.
     >> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Jim. Kam.
     >> KAMARA SUDBERRY: Just it's really hard to follow up
those two answers. I think those are really spot on. You know,

collaboration, partnership is critical to this work. I don't think it gets done without it. You know, that isolation, that burnout that can occur when you are really trying to move the needle, you know, but one person's story or what their expertise can be a challenge. And I think really trying to share in on that experience trying to lean in, when you don't have all the answers. Bring energy and some time to this work is critical, you don't have to ever be the expert in order to make an impact.

So, I think to Jim's point really finding those folks who have that shared desire and shared purpose. And then really bringing opportunities to arm them with tools to be effective, right? Because UN you can have an interest, you have a desire and you even have a relationship. But without that lived experience, without really walking in those shoes, you can't speak for others. So, I think really being in the right relationship is part of that collaboration and being able to empower people to identify opportunities to get better, I think is so important.

>> SUSAN MAZRUI: And I think to add to what Kam said, I mean, you look to the people who are impacted. So, maybe employees with disabilities. But you may not always feel comfortable in your own company raising some of the issues. So, this really helps spread the experience in a way that's completely safe if you are a person with a disability in a company. Or maybe you feel dis loyal if you say something that's not incredibly positive but is important to be said. So, I think the community of practice also allows people who, you know, know that there's a problem and want to fix it without necessarily feeling like they are attacking their own company. It's more that they are collaborating with others to make a positive change.

>> JAMES THURSTON: I like that philosophy and approach, Susan. So, we are also at time. There's a couple of comments and questions. I'm going to quickly ask Cindy's question from the chat and see if any of our speakers want to weigh in on that. Cindy asked, I think an important question and I think it, Kam, builds off what you were saying a moment ago, is how do you give permission to the businesses or, I guess, to employers or even different roles, give them permission to make mistakes during this process. Any thoughts from any of you, including Shane, you and Yulia, as well and Lourdes.

>> JIM LINK: I will chime in on this one, James. The answer really lies in the already existing culture of that business or that organization. And the ones that are the most innovative, the ones that are the most entrepreneurial in their thinking are the organizations who already grasp failure as a component of their long-term success. So, the answer to this

question is hard, really, because if you work in a company or an organization where that mistakes are viewed as career ending rather than career defining, that's clearly an issue or a concern.

But at the right leaders and the right managers in organizations set a goal around inclusivity. They hold themselves accountable with that goal through enthusiastic authentic and genuine measures and acknowledge their successes and failures. That's ideally how it works. I have coached and counseled in organizations where that is not the case. But clearly, I know how to do it in those organizations. And if you can find ones that have that mindset, they will be much quickly agile in getting toward an inclusive culture.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you. So, we are at time. Before we close, I do want to mention, Karamo had put in a question of, how can we in Africa localize the issues of inclusion in the workplace when we have challenges around accessibility with very low budget for disability inclusion? We don't have time to answer that completely now, but please do send us an email, and we certainly want to engage with you on that. And I will say that this conversation today is part of the Zero Project conference. The Zero Project all year long every year focuses on identifies good practices in every region of the world for inclusion. Including around employment and including specifically in Africa we have some great partners there, including our own G3ict country representative. So, there are good approaches, recognizing that this issue of inclusion broadly but certainly inclusion in the workplace is something that is important and challenging in every single country in the world.

So, thank you for asking that. We will follow up with more as well. And as question close, I will ask Lourdes if you haven't already, if you could just put the link to our page where you can stay involved with us on this topic.

Finally, thank you, Susan, thank you, Jim, thank you, Kam, Shane, Lourdes and Yulia for your remarks today. Thank you, Steelcase for making it possible and being such a great partner with us on this topic. Also thank you to the captioners and the interpreters as well. We appreciate your efforts in making this as accessible as possible.

(Session was concluded at 1730 CET)

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