Statement for the 15th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

Call for States Parties to Promote Digital Accessibility Skills and Ensure the Engagement of Persons with Disabilities in Inclusive ICT Policy

G3ict – Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies – Dr. Mohammed Ali Loutfy, Director for Capacity Building and Advocacy

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

* On behalf of the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies and its stakeholders, including Persons with Disabilities, the IT industry, and more than 4,500 accessibility professionals in 92 countries dedicated to promoting digital accessibility in all sectors,

* Considering the pervasive exclusion of Persons with Disabilities from essential digital contents and services despite the wide availability of digital accessibility solutions

* Concerned by the persisting gaps in fulfilling Article 9 of the CRPD on Accessibility and the implementation of compliant digital accessibility policies and programs

* Aware that such gaps in implementation are caused in large part by a lack of awareness and accessibility skills among professionals responsible for the design, production and maintenance of digital products contents and services,
* Concerned about the prevailing neglect of voices of persons with disabilities and their advocacy efforts around issues of digital accessibility, particularly through their continuous exclusion from decision-making regarding inclusive ICT policies and programs

* We call all States Parties to the CRPD to:

1. Promote the inclusion of the subject matter of accessibility by higher education and vocational training institutions in their computer sciences curricula, digital media, and information technology related degrees.

1. Work with relevant national or regional accreditation bodies as well as persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to promote the inclusion of accessibility courses as a requirement for accredited computer sciences, digital media, and information technology related diplomas.

1. Require that services contracted, or professionals assigned or recruited by public agencies for the design, production and maintenance of digital contents and services be trained and qualified in accessibility matters.

1. Consider adopting the professional certification framework of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) for a systematic development of accessibility skills aligned with international good practices including but not limited to core accessibility competencies, accessible web sites development and accessible digital documents.
2. Consider supporting educational initiatives, such as G3ict’s Digital Accessibility Rights Education Academy, that aim at enhancing persons with disabilities’ digital accessibility advocacy leadership through scholarship programs, knowledge development opportunities, and global networking platforms.

With our sincere appreciation for your attention.