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ADOPTING THE SMART CITY ACCESSIBLE ICT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MODEL POLICY
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>> JAMES THURSTON: Hello, good day, everyone. We're just letting participants into the room. We'll just wait a minute while people come into the room. Thank you. We'll get started in just one minute. As people are coming into the room, thank you all for joining us. Why don't we get started as people are coming in. Good day, I'm James Thurston. I'm a Vice President here with G3ict, the global initiative for inclusive ICTs. And we're happy to have you joining us for this discussion. And we think it will be engaging and informative. The title of this event, of this discussion is Adopting the Smart City Accessibility ICT Procurement Model Policy. This is a Model Policy developed by the G20 Smart City Alliance. This event today is one way that G3ict, is recognizing Global Accessibility Awareness Day, and we're glad you could join us for this event.

We know that cities worldwide are undergoing a rapid and significant, really, digital transformation. And we know that the way cities are buying and deploying technology is in ways making the digital divide for people with disabilities worse not better. So that's what the focus of this conversation is and the Model Policy that we will be talking about for cities. Our goal with this event today is to hear from global leaders about specific strategies and about this model procurement policy for cities that cities can adopt to support greater inclusion of people with disabilities through accessible technology.

So before going any further, I would like to ask my colleague Yulia to describe how we will manage the event to optimize accessibility. Yulia.

>> Thank you, James. Do you see the slides?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Not yet.

>> One more attempt. I think it should work now.

>> YULIA SARVIRO: Welcome everybody. We want to walk you through some of the practices, so our event is the most useful and convenient for all our attendees. First of all, this meeting is recorded. It will be made available to the public. And of course, to all our participants. We have closed captions available in English. You can switch them on by clicking on closed captions button in the menu. Or you can also check the chat for the link. We have auto translated captions available in French, German, and Spanish. We know that we do have a lot of participants from French and Spanish-speaking country so, we hope you will find it helpful. Please check the chat for the link. And you will go to the web browser page with this auto translated captions. And we have International Sign Language interpretation available. You can pin the interpreter by right-clicking on her image.

We would ask the panelists to keep the microphones muted unless you are speaking. We also would like to ask attendees, if you have a question to panelists, please use Q&A section, not the chat. And you are welcome to use the chat for any general comments or if you have any technical issues. The G3ict team will be monitoring the chat. So in case there is something wrong, let us know and we will try to help.

We are having the Q&A sessions scheduled toward the end of our discussion. But if there are any questions left or any comments that you would like to make after the meeting, please send them to info@smartcities4all.org. Thank you, James

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Yulia. So today's event, this conversation is part of a larger collaboration among a few different organizations. And I would like to ask each to make some brief welcoming remarks to get us started. I'll let you start. My organization is an international nonprofit organization. We were created about 16 years ago with support of the United Nations, specifically to focus on the inclusion and rights and digital inclusion of the more than 1 billion people with disabilities around the world. And we do that in a bunch of different ways which you can see on the website. But several years ago, we launched a global initiative with partners that's focused on inclusive cities. It's called Smart Cities for All. And through that initiative that we work directly with cities and with leading partners like the ones you'll hear about in just a second.

So with that, I'm going to ask each of our partner organizations if you could introduce yourselves. And Federico, would you like to start? Federico? All right, let's go to Rushi.

>> RUSHI RAMACHANDRAPPA: Hi, everyone. I'm grateful for the space today to talk about the commitment that we've made to accessibility and to this agenda. As you might expect, the world economic forum promotes inclusivity across the board. We have a huge number of issues, but when it comes to cities, I probably don't need to tell you all, cities and local services are ground zero for accessibility. So that's why it's really important that when you talk about the accessibilities, now the forum is good at producing frameworks and high-level dialogues and next week is our annual meeting.

But I'm excited about this work in particular because it goes past that. It goes to the practicality of how we make a difference. And so that's really what the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance was founded to do. It was intended to create those -- or not even create but compile those foundational, ethical policies that would underpin a smart city or even just any city that wants to deploy technology, that wants to do so in a sustainable, ethical way, that respects its citizens and respects the sustainability of what it's trying to do.

So we can dig into that later when we look at more in-depth and have a panel discussion. But that's really why I'm fully supporting what James and partners are trying to do with this effort here and this webinar.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much. We really enjoy but also benefit from the collaboration from the G20 Smart City Alliance and the World Economic Forum. Laura, would you like to go next?

>> LAURA RUBY: Sure. I'm Laura Ruby and I'm with Microsoft. And we're here today because we made a decision to partner with the Forum and G20 and to support the launchpad project because it's such a natural fit with our mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. As a company, we've upped our commitment to create and open doors to bigger opportunities for the more than 1 billion people with disabilities worldwide. And the work that we're sharing with you today is just one way that we're doing that. For us, creating inclusive economic opportunities for everyone means removing barriers to workforce entry, creating cultures of inclusion within workforces and societies, and increasing access to digital technology for everyone. We're here today because we know that cities have a very specific and significant role to play in improving societal inclusion for people with disabilities. And we know from our experience and from the work of leading cities like Los Angeles that inclusive digital technology can bridge the barriers to communication, interaction, and information. So I really want to applaud the work of G3ict, the World Economic Forum, and G20 as you partner with the cities worldwide to adopt the Model Policy and include accessibility in procurement policy. So this is really an incredibly powerful way for cities to leverage accessible technology and to increase inclusion for everyone. Thank you.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you very much. And a little bit later in the discussion here, we will be talking about an initiative called the Inclusive Procurement Launchpad. That's a way that G3ict, our nonprofit, is working with cities around the world including a couple that you'll hear from in a moment. Microsoft has been generous in supporting our work in bringing this G20 Model Policy to cities around the world. So thank you Laura and Microsoft for that support to our organization.

I believe we have Federico back now.

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: Can you hear me?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Yes, we can, Federico.

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: Yeah, sorry, hello. We're having a little bit of a rainstorm and not working so well. But I'm here from United Cities and Local Governments. I'm the Accessibility Policy Officer here. And just United Cities and Local Governments is the largest network of cities, local and regional government, and we represent their voices both with dialogues between other municipalities and at the U.N. And in terms of this particular webinar, it's important to what we've been promoting both within our policies around accessibility and universal design and digitalization. We have two communities of practice. One on digital cities and accessibility. Both which connect on issues that are transversal. And are part of the coalition of digital rights. And one thing and I'm sure all of you that are working so well is one of the things really influential ways that cities can be involved in equity and promoting human rights is the way their procurement policies are lead. We are working on the U.N. convention on the rights of persons with disabilities along with other frameworks including the WHO city work and communities. We want to ensure that not only the commitments are there but also what we're doing at the local level really resonates with all our citizens and residents. Particularly those who are normally marginalized and put on the outside of society. And if we've seen anything from the COVID pandemic, just that digital divide is even wider than we thought. So just in short, I'm looking forward to the dialogue, this is why we're here. And we're definitely hoping that members of the community affected but our broader membership can be involved in the future.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Federico and thank you for partnering on this event. And all the work you do focusing on accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities.

So with that, and we'll hear from Laura Ruby and Rushi a bit later as well. Let's get started. I think it's important to get started with cities and actual city perspectives so. We're going to pull in a few cities to give us some remarks and answer some questions. A colleague and a friend of mine says that cities are where people live, work, and play. Increasingly, we are becoming a global, urban community. Our world is rapidly urbanizing. And what cities do is critically important including how they buy and deploy technology. So today we are fortunate to have leaders from three cities. They are partners with G3ict are committed to using procurement to promote greater inclusion by adopting this G20 Model Policy for Procurement of Accessible Technology that we'll be talking in much more detail in a bit.

G3ict is working with these three cities to adopt the policy. The cities are Los Angeles, Istanbul, and Quito. So geographically diverse. And we have Stephen David Simon. he is the Executive Director of the Department of Disability in the City of Los Angeles. And we have Ricardo Alberto Pozo Urquizo, he is the Mobility Authority Secretary for the City of Quito. Thank you for being partners. And Burcu, maybe we can start with you and speak from the perspective of Istanbul, why you think it's important for Istanbul to look at and adopt the G20 Model Procurement Policy.

>> BURCU OZDEMIR: Thank you, James. Good morning and good afternoon to everyone. Istanbul has a population of more than 16 million people. It means that exactly is really an important pilot cities for accessibility. Actually, Article VII specifically states that information and communication

technologies must be accessible for the disable based on the metropolitan measures calls for the provision of accessible services. The department has taken this mission to heart. Our product procurement process includes accessibility as a design requirement. And we have product tested for accessibility prior to launch. Being a Smart City, meeting the needs of all of our citizens. In other words, being inclusive. As a department with primary responsible for ICT within the Istanbul municipality, we are aware of the challenge this presents. A critical step in becoming a Smart City and composing all of Istanbul. We saw that the digital divide takes many forms. The economic divide, the gender divide, the knowledge and skills divide, and accessibility divide. Just as there are many forms of digital divide, there are many ways to add dress the challenges it represents. We looked in product development. From an organizational standpoint, integrating accessibility into our process is critical. Codifying into our information and communication technologies procurement process will ensure the availability of affordable and accessible digital services for people with disabilities. I guess it is very short, brief information of what we are doing and how it's going on with us.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Burcu, thank you so much. And one of the things that impressed our team and partners with the work of Istanbul is part of the G20 Smart City Alliance is your recognition about the legal requirements you already have as a city to focus on inclusion and accessibility. Your already deep understanding about what the digital divide in Istanbul looks like. And the recognition that policies like this procurement Model Policy can really help impact and improve the situation with some of those divide. So we technically we have not allowanced that Istanbul and Quito will be the next two cities that we're working with, but we're thrilled to get started working with you in Istanbul. Thank you, Burcu.

>> BURCU OZDEMIR: Thank you.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Sure. Stephen, before I ask you about process, I want to just check in with you about sort of the why. Los Angeles it was first city that we worked with as part of the launch pad project to adopt this model project for procurement. Can you say a little bit about why that was important to you? I know you were immediately interested and really worked to get others in the city departments involved. But what did you and some of your colleagues in the city see in this kind of a Model Policy that was important? Stephen? We're not hearing you, Stephen.

Stephen, for me, you're on mute.

There you go. Oh, I think we got you. Stephen? While --

>> STEPHEN DAVID SIMON: Trying again.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Okay, we have you, Stephen.

>> STEPHEN DAVID SIMON: Good morning, from Los Angeles. Sorry about that. See what happens with technology sometimes. You know, obviously, yes, Los Angeles has been very vested in this process. So glad to have partnered with the folks at G3ict. Like my colleague from Istanbul was from saying, first and foremost on the front-end is the access and inclusion for people with disabilities. It can't be an afterthought. It has to be integrated I would argue into everything that we do as a city.

And this digital divide has gotten here through the COVID pandemic. So of course as a compliance end, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Rehabilitation Act and so on, but also our compliance is easier if the products we purchase are accessibility in the first place. And we don't have to come back when someone challenges it because they don't have access. And this isn't really just for constituents, for the community to have access to civic engagement, it's really big improvement, at least opportunity for productivity for employees with disabilities as well. And gives us a stronger workforce. And I would add also something people don't think about as much, the backend is risk management. Failure to comply regarding accessibility comes at a huge cost. And in the U.S., enforcement of federal accessibility laws are generally designed to be fought through the civil legal system. And we've had lawsuits on response, housing, sidewalk, and what they all have in common actually is the settlements required accessible communication, constituent access to information, accessing and tracking data. And by doing this proactively, there's a taxpayer cost savings for a city that becomes more effective in a truly Smart City.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you for that, Stephen. And for a couple things. Raising the point and making clear that when cities are buying technology that's accessible and deploying that accessible technology, the benefits go to people living in the city or tourists in the city but also to your city employees. And all of your cities employ people with disabilities. So making sure that the technology works for them is important. And I'm glad that you also raised one of the drivers, I guess I would say, for cities wanting to be more inclusive which is legal compliance issues. There are other important drivers for commitment to inclusion. I think compliance and risk management have to be on the radar screen for cities as well. As they think about the kinds of technology they're purchasing.

We'll come back to you in a minute, Stephen. But Ricardo, Quito is one of the next cities that we'll be working with on adopting this G20 Model Policy. Can you talk a little bit about why it was important for Quito to look at this Model Policy and adopt the Model Policy for procurement?

>> RICARDO ALBERTO POZO: Hi, everyone. Can you hear me?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Yes.

>> I'm representing Ricardo this morning. He's in another meeting right now. But I'm representing him and the Secretary of Mobility from the municipality of Quito. And adopting accessible information technology and communication procurement policies guarantees that our institutions of services for public use include intuitive policies ensure equal rights for all citizens especially people with disability, to interact with the public space and services that the city can offer through their different platforms. So currently, Quito is working on implementation of technologies to achieve better levels of operation in mobility, in collecting for environment, security, territory planning. So these are priorities as a municipality. And as the secretary of mobility. So this is very important for us to have these tools for procurement policies.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much. And thank you for stepping in for Ricardo. We appreciate that. And as with Istanbul, we haven't formally announced that we will be working with

Quito to adopt the Model Policy like with Los Angeles, but that announcement will be coming soon. And we're looking forward to it.

One of the interesting and important ways that Quito is coming to this Model Policy is with the mobility department, the secretary in the lead. We know transportation and mobility departments in cities around the world are enormous and consumers of technology and users of technology. So having that department in one of the lead positions in Quito I think will be incredibly effective as we work with the city on understanding and then adopting the Model Policy for procurement. Thank you.

Stephen, if I could come back to you as the first city, we worked with on adopting this Model Policy, Los Angeles finished the process not too long ago. And basically our G3ict team worked with people in your city over a couple months in a series of five or six different working meetings. But could you talk about, Stephen, the actual process in Los Angeles of who was involved in understanding the policy? Who was involved in discussions about maybe tweaking the Model Policy? And what were some of the key steps involved from your perspective? Thinking about other cities who are attending today, and they might be interested in hearing how you went about working with the Model Policy.

>> STEPHEN DAVID SIMON: It's funny, you say we finished the process, and we're thinking we barely just started. Of course, the drafting and really tailoring the policy to the city is what we spent the last several months on. I think our success in getting to where we are, which is we're close to formal adoption of the policy. It's a city council action. It's probably an announcement from the mayor. All those pieces are still in process. And the trainings that departments need to implement. But I think, again, our success was from the high-level response we started with. We'd leadership from the mayor's office and neighborhood services. Our deputy mayor, Mary Hodge, championed this. We co-chaired with the city's Chief Procurement Officer and her team. And my folks in the Department of Disability. We engaged key departments that played specialized roles like information technology agency, public works, contract management, general services. They're folks who do some procurement for other departments or buy at a large scale or deal with technology on a daily basis.

But we also engaged other large departments, transportation, recreation and parks, who do a lot of procurement and model different needs types of needs for procurement. They may be buying technology to make sure families can register kids for adaptive recreation program. Well, that technology needs to be accessible, right? They may be purchasing buses and physical equipment, but the technology around it, again, has to be accessible. So just explaining to departments, the importance of this was a key up front. Now what's funny, if you recall some of the push back we got, I think our first two trainings were built around why access and inclusion for people with disabilities was so important. And we got push back not because folks disagreed with. That we got push back because they said, we entirely agree with that. We just need to know how to implement this policy. How do we change our procurement? What do we need to do? And that was exciting for me as the head of the Department on Disability.

So moving to best practices and moving to implementation I think is going to be at the heart of any other city really implementing the policy. What is it that the person that drafts the contracts needs to

know to move forward? And then I think what extends from that is, and it's a gap that we recognize we have here is making sure departments understand how to determine whether what they're purchasing is accessible. That's a skill set that is at a high level. And I don't know that a lot of folks recognize that. So we will probably have to change some staffing categories in the city. We'll have to do some hiring to make sure there are people who can read a volunteer product accessible template or otherwise be able to engage that the city is getting what it asks for and purchases.

And my other footnote to that, we engaged the city attorney's office and others to also make sure that we have a good process when vendors are trying to sell a city a product that simply isn't accessible or something that the city gets challenged because the employees or community can't use it. We have to have a great process to either get a replacement product or ideally make sure we don't purchase something inaccessible in the first place. And thing Model Policy gets us to a place where we can do that.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you for that, Stephen. And I think from our perspective and working with you, the first city that we will have worked with closely on understanding and adopting the Model Policy for procurement, I think our team was really impressed with the breadth of participation there across departments in Los Angeles. I think for each of the working sessions, we have at least 30 different people from different departments that included senior leaders in departments, like yourself, and also managers who are on point for different issues related to technology and accessibility and inclusion. So that was great for us to see. I think we were thrilled with the progress that you made in Los Angeles and glad we were able to provide some support in that. And I think it's important what you raised too around being really sort of tactical in how do we do this? We know we buy a lot of technology in Los Angeles, and we want to make sure it's accessible. But what kind of training and skills do they need in procurement officials but also with IT professionals. And it's great to see you working through those issues as well as part of the process. And maybe just finely, Stephen, I'm wondering if you could touch on the extent to which part of the process there in Los Angeles and upping its commitment to buying accessible technology, the role of the Paralympics and the Olympics coming up in what seems like a longtime but to you, seems like it's not a longtime away. Was that part of the process in thinking there?

>> STEPHEN DAVID SIMON: It's tomorrow. 2028 is coming really, really quickly. Yes, absolutely. Our big picture, something like the Olympics and Paralympics coming to the city makes us rethink and re-evaluate all to our systems on a truly grand scale. And the beauty of this sort of targeted procurement piece is it lets us look at how we standardize and streamline other aspects. As we get excited to engage newer technologies and more kiosks and ways to move people around the city unmasked in ways that don't normally happen. In ways to regulate traffic and so on. All this technology is being purchased quickly and making sure the accessibility aspect of it is a key element up front and not an after-thought. I'll say that a million times, is something that us working through this process, it's helped us to do. And quite frankly, a lot of the technologies that are coming into place, everything from way finding to communications and places like airports, a lot was originally

designed to be an accommodation. And got translated into use for the general public. So I keep thinking if we focus on disability and accessibility at the forefront of our big events and our day-to-day business, it's going to help improve and streamline the work we're doing.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Stephen. And before we wrap up this part of the conversation with these three leading cities, let me check in with Quito and Istanbul. Any last thoughts or remarks from either of you in Quito or Istanbul?

>> BURCU OZDEMIR: I can say that I'm really, really appreciate a part of this policy statement and policy study with you. Because right now, the hot topic for us digital inclusiveness. It's quite important. Because the public environment is changed. Right now everything is public services in digital works. And if you want to be inclusive, we need to get this procurement because it's also forcing other private companies and also our organization inside. And teaching this culture to other departments. And if we well define this procurement and policy, it will help the people when they crush any problem, how can they solve it? And we are learning from the L.A. experience and -- this is also a lesson learned things. I can add this right now.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Burcu, thank you so much. And we're looking forward to starting the work with you. And I think your remarks about technology in cities is a great segue to our next group of speakers and discussions where we have several experts and leaders on cities, on Smart Cities on technology procurement accessibility.

So for this part of the conversation, I would like to invite in Federico, Rushi, and Laura who you met before and introduced themselves. And then an additional speaker, Ruthbea. Let's transition into what we know about Smart Cities. And Rushi, maybe starts with you, if you could speak about why the G20 Smart City Alliance and the World Economic Forum decided to create accessibility and inclusion procurement policy as one of your first five model policies for the Smart City Alliance. We were thrilled to see that commitment by the forum and the G20, that 20% were focused on accessible and inclusion. Rushi, can you speak about the why of that?

>> RUSHI RAMACHANDRAPPA: Yeah, totally. So if you recall, you know, the G20 global Smart City Alliance was commissioned to compile policies for Smart Cities for any city that wants to deploy technology. And we organized that thinking around not just accessible inclusivity but all of the things we think of critical to creating a Smart City program that lasts. Those are things like sustainability, interpretability, transparency, privacy, all of these things we think of as very important. But we did start with looking at accessibility and inclusivity, and that was after us doing a review of policies that we thought could be viable candidates for those initial efforts. And because we're doing this, we've been building more and more of these policies ever since. And it's not going to be a finished product. We're always going to be combining more of these policies. But we did start with procurement. And that was for a few different reasons actually.

The first and most obvious is the same thing that everybody on this panel or in the session said already which is that you can't have a Smart City without it being accessible, without it being inclusive. And it needs to be built in. So it's obviously crucial to having an ethical Smart City. But

secondly, the policy which as you say, G3ict already done a lot of work on, it has the benefit of being practical and well-defined. So you know, unlike other candidates out there which, if you're thinking about how you achieve accessibility, the strategy you go for, you can end up going in lots of different directions, but this policy has the benefit of being well-defined and practical that we can see it being implemented relatively quickly. Nothing in the city is fast. Not to say it will be easy. But we can see it happening. And has that tangibility as well. A tangible solution that gets you along that journey.

Thirdly, because it leverages public procurement, it has potential to have a massive impact. And that impact extends obviously in the public sector and in the local city services but also beyond that. If we can shift the market. Because public sector has its problems, but I think it's fair to say that the vast majority of websites, digital services are still not accessible enough. So, we can actually shift the dial to the bigger picture.

And fourthly, just to finish off this question, this says foundational policy. If you ask cities whether they're doing, they think they're doing and then they check. And they're actually not. And so they should be doing it, they know they shower doing it, but the reset shows that they are not. And there's a big gap with the member cities has uncovered. If we have time, we can go into in a bit more detail further in the discussion.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Yeah, Rushi, thank you for bringing up that research. For those who have been working in technology and accessibility, I think that research validates some of our own research at G3ict and just experience. That with policies in general around inclusion and accessibility, it's wanting to have a policy. It's another thing to actually implementing that policy consistently and across departments. It's great that you guys focused there. And I think that your recognition that there's already a track record of doing this procurement at the national level of governments. So what the forum allowed us to do with an expert team is tweak that existing policies and make them relevant for cities and how they buy technology. So thank you for the opportunity and for those remarks.

Federico, UCLG, your organization, is the convening pace for cities around the world. And I know you're advancing a lot of really important topics to cities and people that live in the cities and run those cities. Can you talk a little bit more building on what you said in the introduction about what UCLG thinks about issues of accessibility and inclusion and why they're important today?

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: Well, I mean, like for local government, in some ways it's quite simple although it's hard. It's an aspect of wanting the city to represent the people who actually live there. And more we go on, we know more with data and different interactions that we have such as social media platforms. We know more about the people who are actually utilizing the services. Or not being able to utilize the services that we have. And I wanted to echo and also applaud the cities I mentioned before. Like Los Angeles, I think one thing you mention is the cross-departmental connection and wanted to say that's a hard step. So kind of applaud for being able to bring together those departments. Because a lot of what we see in terms of equity and access, they're topics that are different to mobilize different departments around. So just having a window there that really brings together different departments on a common issue to see it as a common good. And then the other thing why it's so important is equity in access, something that we knew before, but is really key

to the public services delivery as a core component of that. And I think as we build out how we're going to deliver our services and how they're going to reach people, has to take that equity and human rights-based approach. Really looking at, I think, the convention provides a really good framework and the general comment on article 9 that can go into how public service needs to get there. And we look at the common benefits of accessibility, even for groups that are traditionally not associated with people with disabilities. Such as people coming into a city with limited knowledge of the local language. And technology can be a big driver there as well as we think about policies on migration that are more inclusive. But really bringing into cities, really bringing in people to cities in a more inclusive way. And that change from integrating people, that integration model which was putting people into spaces that were already created and changing to inclusive spaces that can be more co-designed. So that's a lot of what we've been seeing. And our policy we're working on with our community practice around accessibility, it was really led from civil society. And that's another thing that I think that the focus of having public service delivery be more equability. It also builds that trust and governance. That government can really handle equity and what our civil society partners and then building out the recommendations for us and what with we need to do and where we -- the lens we need to be running was really important in understanding that it's not only about the next election. It's not only about how that mayor is seen but really the legacy of the city and the culture of that city or region. What is it going to be? And a majority or all of our members, it's not that they want to exclude people. They are just trying to understand how do I really create that roadmap forward? What are the steps I need to take? And I think one of the thing that's really nice about this policy is it gives that roadmap, that step by step, which is really important because sometimes depending on the size of the city or the -- (no audio).

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: It's really important to provide, let's say, perspectives, whether it's regional or capacity-wise on how people get started. And knowing that it's a roadmap. Like Stephen was saying from Los Angeles, they still, there's so much to do. But they've taken one of the hardest steps is putting it in there and making the investment, the long-term investment. (Breaking audio)

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: We're going to work together on this. And this digital (breaking audio)

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Federico. One for the work that you're doing at G3ict, your communities of practice. It's great to hear that work, that focus on inclusion and equity and accessibility is demand-driven from within the cities. And I appreciate you raising the important point about including civil society and disabled persons organizations in that work in cities which is obviously a core principle that a lot of us share. In a little bit, we'll be hearing from Dr. Mohammed Ali Loutfy who has a lot of experience with those organizations and the civil society sector and its approach to cities and technology and accessibility. So thank you so much, Federico.

Ruthbea, maybe if you could start and let us know a little bit about your role and the work of the IDC. And I guess the question that I would love to have you weigh in on is we really know that you in particular and your group at the IDC are recognized as leaders in defining and advancing Smart Cities. When I make decisions about Smart City conference, I often look to see if you'll be speaking there

because I appreciate the great work that you and IDC do. We know that at IDC, you see accessibility and inclusion as core to Smart Cities, much of what we have heard today. So can you talk about why from your perspective accessibility and inclusion are core to the work that Smart Cities are doing?

>> RUTHBEA YESNER: Sure. Thank you. Very exciting. I'm Ruthbea Yesner. I head up our government education and Smart Cities and community groups at IDC. And we are a market research firm that focuses on specifically technology. So my role has always been research and advisory services to governments and to vendors that serve governments around the use of technology. And I'm mostly known because I started our Smart Cities and communities' practice. And part of that was defining in the early stages, you know, in 2010, what a Smart City means. And I think when I was thinking about that, the first thing is we're trying to make life better for everybody using technology. That's sort of the fundamental mission of Smart Cities. And government themselves as we've heard from the cities have a moral imperative, their job is to serve the public. That includes everybody.

So just baked into our definition was this idea that technology must serve everyone and be inclusive. And that's the whole point. And often it was talked about in terms of the triple bottom line before. Environmental, social, and financial. Now we kind of talk about it as ESG. And within the S, there's a lot around digital inclusion.

So that's really how we -- the why of why we looked at that. And the other is because these issues are related. So when you think about sustainability, economics, social issues, they often gather around certain groups altogether as big pressures. So you may have accessibility issues who might be hit hardest if there's a flood or a fire. And you might also have more financial strain. So really, one of the ways we are looking that the more and more is there's a lot of bang for your buck when you think of these things altogether. And when you start to think of digital tools that can actually work all together. So I really loved what I think Los Angeles, Stephen was saying around cross-departmental work. Because that also applies. Public safety and transportation can be together thinking about sustainable and accessibility issues.

And the other thing I wanted to say that I think is really important. All these things have been mentioned by everybody, so I'm sort of emphasizing a lot of already, terrific, amazing comments. But the other thing we talk about in Smart Cities is civic engagement. And human-centered design. So, I think the other thing that becomes very important is representation. As you're starting to deliver services, there has to be representation from the public. We say with Smart Cities, you want to involve. But there has to be representation from different groups around accessibility and people with different disabilities. So, I think that's very important as you're designing services, thinking about the procurement, thinking about policy implementation, that you really make sure that your human-centered design is inclusive of all the humans. And sometimes I do feel like that's a little bit left out when we see some of the work.

And I have a super quick story about that and then I'll stop talking. But this was enlightening for me. I was working with victor and James at world Smart Cities expo years ago. And I was very concerned because all the little expo areas were on this little raised lip. And I spent the day being like don't trip over and fall on your face because you're going to look like an idiot. But then I realized in talking to

Victor who is in a wheelchair, he can't even go to the expo floor. He couldn't get into most of the exhibits because of this lip.

So, I think it becomes really important to have inclusion.

The last thing I wanted to say was about technology which is what we're here for. As Rushi and a lot of people have said, there's work to be done in making sure technology is inclusive. We can move the markets as governments by having procurement policies that are accessible. There's massive spending power. So, you can actually drive an accessible market and services by having these things embedded in procurement. But I think the other thing that's really important is to think about that there's so much opportunity with technology itself. Voice activation, the transcription services we're using, video with our interpreter, even auto mandatory evacuation, even digitizing physical assets in a city. Which we talk about all the time in Smart Cities. These are all really important ways to really think about technology that can be supportive for a lot of people.

So, I'll stop now. Thank you so much for having me. I'm really enjoying the conversation.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Ruthbea, thank you so much for your remarks. It's great to see a leading, mainstream Smart City group that really defines what it means to be smart. Having this interconnected focus on usability and accessibility. It really helps our work as a civil society organization to have you out there championing and helping people to see the connection between inclusion and being a Smart City.

You mentioned the big Smart City expo in Barcelona that usually happens every year. I remember that three or four years ago. And at that same show, I walked around to probably 100 booths. These are Smart City solution providers, all really exciting. One of them knew whether or not their solution that they were selling to cities was accessible and worked for the city employees and citizens with disabilities. Just one. In later year, I've noticed more know. But this Model Policy that the G20 has come up with is to help drive industry to put more focus on inclusion and accessibility of the smart solutions that they're selling to cities. So thank you for raising that show.

And Laura, that's a great segue to you. Microsoft is a leading global technology vendor. You, yourself, are an expert on accessibility policies and standards like the G20 Model Procurement Policy. Can you talk about why you think this policy is a good opportunity for cities?

>> LAURA RUBY: Absolutely. As James mentioned, I've been working on technology policy and accessibility with Microsoft for many, many years. And procurement is very powerful. It's something I'm really passionate about.

I want to bring the conversation back to the why. I mean, one of the reasons I'm so passionate about procurement and Microsoft a and a lot of my industry colleagues are is because it's the way we get this fantastic, accessible technology into the hands of people with disabilities who really need it. So if the city were to ask me, why should I look at procurement? Why should I take the time and energy to put a policy like this in place? I would say, first of all, adding accessibility to your procurement policy is a proven inclusion strategy. So a lot of us in industry, we've been working with federal governments

in the United States, in Canada, with the member states in Europe, the European Union, for many, many years. And they have policies. And they work to buy technology that is accessible through the policies so that they're better able to hire, accommodate, and retain people with disabilities in the workforces. And these same governments are able to leverage the technology and the services to make their citizen services like access to justice, emergency services, and education more accessible. Which has been critical, especially as of late with COVID. I think we've all been using technology a lot more during COVID.

And then second of all, this policy, I mean, many governments, they've spent years crafting their policies. Because of the forum's Model Policy which was I was thrilled to help create, this Model Policy streamlines all of the best practices from all of the experiences of these federal and other governments have been doing it. All the best practices are in this template. And cities can tailor fit they want to. And then they can just put it into their existing procurement policy. And I recognize that Stephen said, that's not necessarily an easy thing to do. But at least this model can help you get started. And the Model Policy, it even includes example RFP language. So a city can take that language, pop it into their RFPs. And that let's vendors, like Microsoft, know that we need to include information about the accessibility of our products and services when we respond to that RFP.

And then G3ict has a lot of other resources for cities to leverage.

Third, as industry folk, we have a lot of innovative accessibility features entitle our technology and services. And we're ready to tell cities all about it. We're ready to show you the accessibility features. But in order for that technology to get into the cities so it can help people with disabilities, we need cities to ask us. We need them to put accessibility in their RFPs. We need them to ask us to do demos and to tell them about accessibility of our products.

But we have accessibility reports. And I'm talking about we in the industry. A lot of us have accessibility reports that can help a city understand how our technology aligns with international accessibility standards. And I think Ruthbea just said, we like to compete on accessibility because that helps drive more innovation into the market. And we know that innovation can help cities solve long-standing challenges that they've had.

And then last, in my opinion, there's no better time than now to adopt a procurement policy that has accessibility criteria. Do it while your cities are undergoing their digital transformations so that as you're acquiring technology for everyone, that technology is going to be inclusive and accessible. Historically, people with disabilities have been left behind because accessibility has been an afterthought. But if cities make buying accessible technology part of their Smart City objectives and integrate that into their plans and think about it as part of the digital transformation from the beginning, we won't leave people behind.

Thanks, James

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Laura. And thank you for making what I think is one of the most exciting points in this conversation about inclusive cities and how cities buy technology which is U.S. companies, U.S. Microsoft and I think you would say some of the competitors as well, you want to be

asked about accessible and what you're selling to cities. You want to compete to other companies based on the accessibility of your products and services and innovate on accessibility. So hearing from that from city, I think, is incredible important. And the other piece that you mentioned that kind of echoes what Stephen said as well is through a procurement policy, if you bake accessible into what you're asking for as a city, what you want to buy, it doesn't -- you eliminate the risk of it being an afterthought which is more complicated and expensive to deal with. If you just define it up front. And the Model Policy actually points to global standards that define what accessible means. So U.S. cities don't need to think, well, what does that mean? It's been defined and these standards are ready for you to use in your RFPs.

So, thank you all of you for that great discussion. What I would like to do now is Yulia if you could pull up the PowerPoint. I want to pull in a couple colleagues that we're working with to work with cities. Monica Duhem and Mohammed Ali Loutfy. I'll let them introduce themselves a moment. But we would like to present the Model Policy and the program where we're working with cities like L.A. and Quito and Istanbul called the Inclusive Procurement Launchpad project where we're helping cities adopt the policy. We've all been working with Los Angeles initially on these issues. All of us have been in the accessibility field for a long, longtime.

So, I wanted to pull them to help walk through why this policy is important. And really what does it cover? What does it look like? And I'll ask Bela or one of my comments to put a link to the Model Policy, it's on the World Economic Forum G20 website. You can see it there.

So, with that, Yulia, if you want to go to the agenda slide. We're going to talk about this collaboration between G3ict and G20 and the Forum. Talk about why this procurement policy matters for cities. We have heard about that already, including from the three cities earlier. Go through the main components of the Model Policy. Talk a little bit about this launch pad program where we're providing expert technical cities in understanding and adopting the policy like with L.A. And then have some time for any questions.

So, Yulia, if you want to go to the team slide with the photos. So, before we jump in, I do want to have my colleagues introduce themselves. Monica, would you like to introduce yourself?

>> MONICA DUHEM: Thank you, James. And hello to everyone. I am Monica Duhem. I've been working for many years with G3ict. I'm a founder of HearColors which is an organization that tries to create capabilities on digital inclusion, mostly in Mexico and Latin America. Our main goal is really awareness and creation of capabilities. As everyone said before, companies are aware of the importance of accessibility. Governments are starting to work on accessibility. But we believe it is very important that vendors as well as companies understand what the inclusion and universal accessibility criteria are. In our countries, in Latin America, to have the knowledge is so important because it comes to cost. If we know what we're expecting, if we know what we have to ask for vendor, we will create technological environment that is inclusive. And really eliminate the digital divide. And Federico already said it, it's not only persons with disabilities but it's Indigenous, it's the elderly, it's really a lot of persons that will need and need today inclusive and accessible technology. And I will close with something that I think it's important. The World Health Organization published a

couple of years ago that close to 1 billion young people are at risk of hearing loss because of the use of unsafe listening and very high volume. So image FY19 we didn't have closed captions, a billion young people wouldn't be able to interact with technology. So thank you very much, James.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Sure, Monica. Great to have you. Thank you for joining us. And Mohammed, actually before you introduce yourself, I want to remind folks, if you have questions put it into the Q&A section. Mohammed, would you like to introduce yourself?

>> MOHAMMED ALI LOUTFY: Hi, James. Thank you for having me today. It's great to be here. Among colleagues and friends. Some of them I've worked with in the past. My name is Mohammed Ali Loutfy, I am G3ict city director for capacity building and advocacy. I joined G3ict almost a year ago. A year plus. I come with a background of disability advocacy on many levels. And with regard to different sectors including urban development and disability inclusion. I led alongside with our colleague, our friend Dr. Victor the stakeholder group of persons with disabilities to the habitat 3 general assembly of partners. And I bring to the table the aspect of engaging with issues of accessibility and urban development from the perspective of persons with disabilities and their organizations.

As we might address later on, it's very important for any work on Smart Cities, urban development, resilience, and so forth is to include persons with disabilities and their organizations. Because they are the ones who are the most expert on their own needs before anything else.

And this is -- however, we need to also recognize that persons with disabilities and their organizations also need to develop some leadership skills to engage with policy makers on the level of urban development policies. And bring to the table what they want to see. Knowing that, and I agree that with what other friends have said today that seeing cities adopting policies on accessibility, especially in realm of digital world, is not only beneficial for persons with disabilities as other friends mentioned.

So we are bringing to the table knowledge sharing, capacity building, advocacy efforts, enhancement, by persons with disabilities and the organizations in this field of accessibility and urban development.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much, Mohammed. Yulia, if you could go to the next slide. As Rushi mentioned, they have worked with a bunch of different partners and experts around the world on their set of five model policies. G3ict was the lead in developing this Model Policy for Procurement of Accessible Technology. Laura Ruby and Monica were both a part of the expert team that developed that along with several others.

And Yulia, if you want to go to the next slide.

So we've heard a bit about the why of procurement policy. We know that the digital world still is not accessible. That cities are buying and deploying technology, whether it's web development or mobile apps or smart solutions, entire sector, education sector, financial sectors are using technology more and more. But that technology is not necessarily access for people with a range of disabilities. Another reason why we focus on this issue of procurement is that we know that accessible

technology really is core to supporting human and civil rights. Ensuring legal compliance, we heard from Stephen in Los Angeles about risk and legal compliance. So accessibility really helps manage that kind of risk and makes sure cities are in compliance with laws and regulations in their country. And from my perspective, most importantly, why we focus on procurement policy and our work with cities is we know they work. We have decades of experience of national governments like the U.S. Federal Government, using these procurement policies where they put a requirement on themselves to buy only accessible technology.

The U.S. Federal Government has been doing it for more than 20 years. Other countries across the European Union and other parts of the world have similar policies at the national level. What we're doing here with the G20 is adapting those kinds of procurement policies for cities so they can be investing and using, deploying accessible technology. And the benefits, there's a lot of them. If you're buying accessible technology, your public services will be more accessible to everyone in your city. We've really seen that these policies can create and drive a market, really change the industry to focus more on accessible and inclusion and what they're innovating for technology solutions. And we heard that from Laura just a minute ago.

One of the best employers with people with disabilities in the world is the U.S. Federal Government. In part because they only buy accessible technology. So if you are a person with a disability applying for a job there, you know that the technology will work for you. And Stephen mentioned about the importance of accessible technology for employees with disabilities.

We see in countries certainly that have a focus on accessibility in buying accessible technology that there's growth and support for the technology sector in general. And the accessibility part of that sector in particular. And really developing a lot infrastructure of professionals who have expertise and tools that they can bring to accessibility and inclusion. So there's good benefits of looking at and adopting a policy like this. Before we go to the next slide, Monica or Mohammed, any additional thoughts on the why of a procurement policy?

>> MOHAMMED ALI LOUTFY: Can I come in?

>> JAMES THURSTON: Sure, please.

>> MOHAMMED ALI LOUTFY: I think procurement, the discussion on procurement and digital accessibility is a key step towards recognizing that inclusion of persons with disabilities in the field of Smart Cities or urban development in general is another of human rights. Especially nowadays, we have 182 countries have ratified the CRPD. And the CRPD is an initial source or like main source on the rights of persons with disabilities, have recognized accessibility as one of the key principles to make sure that persons with disabilities have the right to inclusion. And not only in technology but also seeing that technology is necessary step to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to other sectors like education. And James, you brought up an excellent example on how the U.S. Federal Government is one of the most inclusive employers for persons with disabilities in the world.

And also other sources such as the sustainable development goals have recognized that. So in order to make sure that we have the proper infrastructure or the minimum infrastructure for inclusion for

persons with disabilities in the field of digital technology, it's very important to recognize or adopt procurement policy that would enable us to see that digital accessibility or Smart Cities are becoming more and more inclusive for persons with disabilities. We saw today with the three examples we have in this session.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much. Monica, anything before we actually skip ahead to the Model Policy itself?

>> MONICA DUHEM: Just to raise a question. And invite cities to think that what they're doing in cybersecurity, for example, that we've seen a lot of development in procurement towards cybersecurity and nothing on accessibility. So I mean, if we're offering as a city a service using technology, we should think in our procurement as we're thinking on cybersecurity matters, on accessibility. Because all our services and products that we offer digitally or using technology are made to be useful for every.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Monica. Yulia, if you could skip ahead to the actual Model Policy slide. I would like for us to touch on the aspects of this Model Policy to give people a better sense of what they might be advocating their city to adopt.

So I think we mentioned that the drafting of this Model Policy really leveraged decades of experience with similar policies at the national level of government. As we drafted this version for cities, we tried to streamline it a bit. Make it as straightforward as possible but also as complete as we brought in decades of experience. And that's all baked into this Model Policy.

The goal was to create a policy that a city could modify a bit and easily adopt, relatively easily. Just like L.A. has done. And we will start working with Istanbul and Quito to do very soon.

What we're showing on this slide is the core components the Model Policy. This is the entire policy is on the G20 website. But I'll briefly sort of tick through the main components. None of these component pieces are very long. It's a quite brief policy. But comprehensive. So there's an introduction in the Model Policy that says this is the name of the policy and how it comes into effect. There's a set of objective where is we think it's a good opportunity for a city to tie this procurement policy to other objectives it may have around closing the digital divide or economic development. That's an important opportunity there to make those linkages.

And demonstrate the cities' commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Section three of the Model Policy defines the roles and responsibilities. It names what city department or person or unit is in charge of promoting and implementing and enforcing the implementation of the Model Policy. Of buying accessible technology. And remember that the policy itself is on the city. The requirement is on the city, not on the vendors. It's just a requirement that cities put on themselves to say when we buy technology, when we put out tender, we will reference accessibility as a requirement. As Monica was saying, just like security is important in technology purchases, so is accessibility.

The next section actually is beginning to be quite important because we're talking about standards if the first time. This say brief section. And it's just a statement that accessibility will be required as an

attribute of procurement of technology, of ICT. And it points to a relevant global ICT accessibility standard. And we list three of those standards. They're fantastic standards and we list them in the policy.

And here again I want to emphasize that the standards work is largely done. Cities don't need to create a new standard. The standards exist. They have been worked on for years and years. And they are robust and used around the world. And they define what it means for every kind of technology to be accessible for different types of disability.

The next part of the Model Policy is the preparatory study. City procurement departments are doing these preparatory studies as parts of the procurement of technology systems and solutions. And here this part of the policy is just saying that accessibility when appropriate should be part of those preparatory studies. When a city is getting ready to invest in technology.

Section six deals with the use of standards. And making sure that in the mandatory requirements that are part of tenders that the procurement authority for the city refers to the global standards specifically. This part of the policy says that lead agency or department should keep current on the standards. They are standards in technologies evolve. So it's important to stay current with the standards. Section seven deals with conformance. How do suppliers demonstrate they are meeting, conforming to and meeting the requirements for accessibility? The Model Policy itself lists different approaches to supplier conformance including what I would say is the most common approach which is a supplier self-declaration of conformance. Stephen mentioned ways that companies can show for different products and services how they are meeting accessibility standards.

Section eight talks about contract management and how the procurement agency should verify throughout the life of the contract in meeting accessibility requirements.

Section nine, maybe there are some purchases that you would want to exempt from this policy. I think Stephen, as we worked through it in L.A., we didn't necessarily define any exemptions but that's part of the consideration.

Section 10 of the policy deals with some of what we have heard around role-based training. Effective implementation will require some training for procurement officials and making sure that's accounted for. Section 11 talks about how you as a city would monitor how effectively the policy is being implemented. I often point to a university here in the United States, Georgia Tech University, they know that 80% of the procurements reference accessibility standards. And they track that across multiple departments at the university. So 11 talks about that kind of monitoring. And section 12 calls for a periodic review. We suggest every two years looking at the policy and updating if needed.

At the end of the Model Policy, you'll see there's an appendix with three really important things there. As Laura mentioned, there's sample language that you could use. It's simple and straightforward. There's also definitions. We sort of sourced different definitions for access ability and disability from global documents like the U.N. and other organizations. And there's the three standards. That's the policy be design. It's meant to be straight guard and impactful.

Monica and Mohammed, any thoughts or clarifications you would like to add to the policy itself and the components of the policy? Monica? Oh, go ahead, Mohammed.

>> MOHAMMED ALI LOUTFY: Well, just very quickly, James. I would like to again emphasize the idea of engaging with persons with disabilities at all stages of procurement. Whether in terms of planning or determining principles or strategies. Also to make sure that persons with disabilities are consulted as end-users to make sure that whatever we procure for the digital accessibility in Smart Cities is working for them. And I think for example, Microsoft with the great products they make and adopting standards of accessibility there is a good example. Because we see how persons with disabilities are really able to benefit from these softwares.

So engaging with the persons with disabilities and their organizations is really important. And we have to make sure that when we talk about procurement for digital accessibility, we're not just talking about one -- disability as a block of population. It's very diverse. We have to take into consideration needs of all these groups of persons with disabilities whether they're deaf or hard of hearing or blind or physical disabilities. And as we see and heard from colleagues today, like Stephen from L.A. or Laura, Microsoft, how digital accessibility is not beneficial, that digital accessibility and Smart Cities, inclusive Smart Cities is not beneficial only for persons with disabilities but for all people.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Really great points. I think where we've seen governance of all kinds but certainly cities be really effective and even companies is how they engage the disability community as part of sourcing and developing technology. One of the great examples that I point to is the City of Chicago. Where their commissioner for people with disabilities, their IT and CIO worked closely together to make sure that a new digital 311 system was accessible for people with disabilities. So throughout that process, including procurement, but also user testing, they made sure people with disabilities were involved in the process. Monica, anything you'd like to add?

>> MONICA DUHEM: Not only as users but as workers as well, we need to understand what are their need. And finally, I think that the model as you can see, really covers a whole bunch of aspects in how to implement the policy. And I tell cities not to be discouraged if they read the standards for the first time. They can be complicated. But I really, it's like a learning curve. And once you understand and how people with different capabilities really, how they serve and use technology, they'll come much easier.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Fantastic. Mohammed I'll come back to you in a second. I want to make sure, Yulia, if you can go to the launch pad slide. Just mention, we've talked about how G3ict is working with cities. We've completed our work with the City of Los Angeles for now. We'll be starting work with Quito and Istanbul to work with them to understand and adopt this Model Policy. We have an Inclusive Procurement Launchpad project where we're helping cities adopt the Model Policy. Microsoft has funded us generously to work with the cities and provide technical assistance. We sort of source expert teem Teams to work with each city to understand the Model Policy. We have an initial cohort of six cities. Three of those slots are taken by L.A. and Quito and Istanbul but we're talking to other cities about partnering to help them adopt this policy too. If you're interested, please reach out to me and Yulia and Bela.

Mohammed, did you want to jump in?

>> MOHAMMED ALI LOUTFY: Just quickly, James. I would like to build on what Monica said. We need to look at inclusive Smart Cities for persons with disabilities as something that is, again, beneficial for all. Not only from a perspective of bureaucratic, you know and institutional arrangements or legal commitment but also as a business model. And we can tell, like, from the outcomes of adopting procurement of inclusion in urban settings how this is beneficial for different stakeholders including governments, private sector companies, and of course, people in general. The business model is very key strategy to motivate or encourage stakeholders to adopt this model.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Absolutely. Thank you for emphasizing that, Mohammed. Before we close out, I do want to just see if any of the speakers from the cities or the previous panels, any last thoughts any of you would like to share? Stephen?

>> STEPHEN DAVID SIMON: Hi, thank you. I just, one, I want to double down on one of the comments around user testing. We say that. It gets said a lot, but I don't think people take it seriously enough. Where we have organized accessibility like interpreters or captioning, the user testing world just isn't organized at that level. And we even have shortages of interpreters. Especially trilingual interpreters. So I think there's so much build-out that still needs to get done. And I hope that our private sector partners and the public sector teams can work together to develop ways to help people get into training to be interpreters and user-testers formally. And we find ways to really bump up that game. I can't stress it enough, user testing is one of the biggest gaps around broad accessibility.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Really good point. And from the frontlines there, Stephen. Thank you for sharing that. Federico, did you want to make closing remarks?

>> FEDERICO BATISTA POITIER: No, just wanted to say, I think it's been said but really drive home that point that accessibility is not only a thing that you have to do. But it allows us to think more innovatively about policies. And it's so much that we're talking about in the community of practice and the training we do is innovation that's from accessibility, that way it's just changes what's kind of this way of designing policies that allows you to think differently. And provide that framework to actually having a city that honors diversity. And just wanted to drive that home. That connection, accessibility, innovation.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you, Federico, for making that point in connection. And for your earlier. Ruthbea?

>> RUTHBEA YESNER: Yeah, I thought this was great. And I wanted to say too, a lot of times around the innovation and inclusion that Mohammed was talking about, and the user testing is that, there's just, the more diversity there is, the better the outcomes. That's been proven. Right? So you have women leadership. And they find that there's more creative and better solutions and higher performance. So even just in a practical way, everybody is better off when the participants are diverse. And I think we should just remember that as a prove way the world works when we're trying to collaborate.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Yeah. And it's great Ruthbea when multiple organizations, different kinds of organizations like ICT, G3ict, the Forum, Microsoft, all are all sort of delivering that message together. I think it becomes much more compelling.

I think someone from Quito would like to add remarks, please?

>> Hi. Well, I just wanted to say, thank you for this space. We're looking forward to starting this learning process with you all. And the cities that have more experience in this. And Quito, we are leading this process in the country in Ecuador. And we are willing to start this process here in the secretary of mobility with the technology department. So thank you again for this space. And looking forward to starting this learning process.

>> JAMES THURSTON: Thank you so much. We're really excited to be working with you and Istanbul as well adopting the Model Policy. So with that, I want to say thank you to all of the speakers. And to Bela and Yulia on the G3ict team for setting this up and making sure it runs smoothly. I would like to thank the sign language interpreter as well. I know she had some kind of double duty because her colleague was ill. So we appreciate that. And I'll just mention that I believe Bela has been putting resources into the chat. The great news is that with policies like this, there's an enormous amount of tools and good practices and resources already available. So you're not doing this work in a vacuum. You have a lot of experience to build on. So I would encourage you to reach out and check that out as well.

Thank you all very much for joining us. We will be posting this recording if you want to share it with colleagues and direct them to it. Thank you. Have a great rest of your day.