|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| APTlogogreen3 | ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY | **Document No.:** |
| **The 4th Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21 (APT WTDC21-4)** | **APT WTDC21-4/**  **OUT-05 (Rev.1)** |
| 24 – 28 January 2022, Bangkok, Thailand (Hybrid) | 7 February 2022 |

Chair, WG1

PRELIMINARY APT COMMON PROPOSAL

**Modifications to WTDC Question 7/1, "** **Access to telecommunication/information and communication technology services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs "**

|  |
| --- |
| **Priority area:** (Please mark “X” in front of the appropriate item)  \_\_\_ Declaration  \_X Thematic Priorities, Action Plan, Regional Initiatives and SG Questions  \_\_\_ Working Methods  \_\_\_ Resolutions and Recommendations  \_\_\_ Other proposals  **Summary:**  It is proposed to amend the text of WTDC Question 7/1 including the future work topics of this Question. Considering the work of the ITU-D SG1 Question7/1 since the last WTDC-14, it is proposed to modify WTDC Question 7/1, according to the annex below.  **Expected results:**  APT Member administrations invite WTDC to examine the proposal and approve the changes to WTDC Question 7/1.  **References:**  WTDC Question 7/1, " Access to telecommunication/information and communication technology services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs" (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) |

**PROPOSALS**

APT Member administrations propose to modify WTDC Question 7/1, according to the annex below.

**MOD**

**STUDY GROUP 1**

QUESTION 7/1

**Telecommunications/ICT accessibility to enable inclusive communication**

1. **Statement of the situation or problem**

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one billion persons in the world live with some type of disability. According to WHO, about 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in low-income countries. Disability appears in different forms and degrees, regarding physical, sensitive or mental aspects Also, increasing life expectancy results in elderly persons having reduced capabilities. Thus, it is likely that the number of persons with disabilities will continue to rise.

The inclusion in society of persons with disabilities is a policy of Member States.

The objective of such policy is to bring about the necessary conditions for persons with disabilities to enjoy the same opportunities in life as the rest of the population. The disabilities policy has evolved, making urban infrastructure accessible and improving health and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination are common policies of Member States.

With respect to telecommunications, at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Hyderabad, 2010) Member States resolved, by Resolution 20 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010), that access to modern telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, services and related applications must be provided on a non‑discriminatory basis.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) acknowledged that special attention should be given to the needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes acknowledged the need to address the specific ICT challenges facing children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons, migrants and remote and rural communities.

On 13 December 2006, UNGA approved the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which came into force on 3 May 2008.

The CRPD establishes basic principles, and also a State's obligations to ensure equal access to telecommunications/ICTs, including Internet, by persons with disabilities.

Resolution 175 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, calls for the introduction of mechanisms to enhance the accessibility, compatibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services, and encourages the development of applications enabling the use of such services by persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs on an equal basis with others.

Resolution 70 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, resolves that the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) study groups should consider aspects of universal design, non-discriminatory standards, service regulations and measures for all persons, especially persons with disabilities.

The ITU-G3ict Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report highlights a series of elements relevant to

the development of policies on public access to ICTs, mobile communications, TV and video

programmes, web access and public procurement. The report also recognizes the need for

flexible legislative frameworks that foster equitable access to telecommunications/ICTs for

persons with disabilities in a constantly changing technological environment.

ITU-T Study Group 16 has conducted work and studies on multimedia coding, systems and

applications, and Study Group 6 Working Party 6B of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) has conducted work on broadcasting services relevant to ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities.

It is also pertinent to mention that broadband access and usage are highly dependent on

literacy, and ICT literacy as well. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO) estimates that 750 million people aged 15 and above worldwide are

illiterate, i.e. they cannot read or write; and two-thirds of them are women.

Several issues encountered by both disability groups and illiterate groups of people have

common solutions.

It is important to gather information and data addressing many key issues relating to accessibility to telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities. Therefore, a methodology should be developed to assist the information-gathering process.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of digital inclusion and telecommunication/ICT accessibility has gained significant momentum around the world. It becomes very important to mainstream the ICT through the implementation of policies, regulations and communication strategies (including education, employment and health) for the socio-economic development of all people, including persons with disabilities and specific needs. Accessibility principles should be implemented at the design stage of ICT applications and services to bridge the digital divide.

**2** **Question or issue for study**

a) Sharing good practices on implementing national ICT accessibility policies, legal frameworks, directives, guidelines, strategies and technological solutions to improve the accessibility, compatibility and usability of telecommunication/ICT services

b) accessibility of e-government and other socially relevant digital services

c) accessibility of new and emerging technologies

d) education and training for persons with disabilities and specific needs in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, and education and training of experts to assist persons with disabilities and specific needs to use telecommunications/ICTs

e)  use of accessible telecommunications/ICTs  to promote the employment of persons with disabilities to ensure inclusive and open society

f) national experience in collecting information and statistics on telecommunication/ICTs accessibility

g) mechanisms to involve persons with disabilities and specific needs in the process of elaborating legal/regulatory provisions, public policy and standards related to telecommunication/ICTs accessibility.

**3** **Expected output**

a) raising awareness among ITU Members, decision-makers, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and any other stakeholders on best practices in telecommunication/ICTs accessibility;

b) guidelines and recommendations to assist ITU Members as well as all stakeholders on telecommunications/ICTs accessible to build an inclusive society;

c) final report for Member States and Sector Members, operators, service providers and any other interested parties, providing guidance and best practices for the development and implementation of policies, regulatory frameworks and strategies for accessible telecommunication/ICTs for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

d) telecommunication/ICT accessibility training to stakeholders, especially policy-

makers, on how to engage all national and/or regional stakeholders and share good

practices and success stories on the implementation of ICT accessibility policies,

regulatory frameworks and services;

e) highlight ITU products and services available to the members to empower national stakeholders in ensuring telecommunication/ICTs accessibility;

f) identify mechanisms for the use of telecommunications/ICTs to promote the

employment of persons with disabilities, including telework;

g) identify methodologies that make it possible to compile telecommunication/ICT

statistics focused on users with disabilities, in order to monitor the impact of the

implementation of ICT accessibility policies, practices and technological solutions.

**4** **Timing**

These activities should be included in the programme of activities of ITU-D Study Group 1 for

the 2022-2025 study period, as a standalone Question.

**5** **Proposers/sponsors**

**6** **Sources of input**

The following stakeholders are encouraged to supply information for the Question: Member

States, Sector Members, relevant international and regional organizations, public and private

institutions and civil-society organizations involved in the design of policies and advocacy for

the development of technological solutions to alleviate the difficulties faced by persons with

disabilities in accessing telecommunications/ICTs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target audience** | **Developed countries** | **Developing countries** |
| Telecom policy-makers | Interested | Very interested |
| Telecom regulators | Interested | Very interested |
| Service providers/operators | Interested | Very interested |
| Manufacturers | Interested | Interested |

**7**      **Target audience**

**a)**      **Target audience**

The result of the study will serve Member States, and particularly administrations of developing

countries and LDCs, in designing policies and executing strategies and actions for the

implementation of technological solutions that improve accessibility to

telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities. Moreover, it will enable Sector Members

and service providers located in those countries to design and apply proven and successful

commercial practices to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and facilitate their access to

telecommunications/ICTs.

**b)** **Proposed methods for implementation of the results**

Authorities from Member States could consider designing policies and strategies to implement

the most suitable technological solutions in the light of the characteristics of their populations

and countries. In this respect, there could be short-term, medium-term and long-term action

plans so as to permit implementation in phases.

The report should also be useful for administrations of Member States, Sector Members and

service providers to encourage the adoption of commercial practices geared to meeting the

needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs.

**8** **Proposed methods of handling the Question or issue**

**a)** **How?**

1. Within a study group:

– Question (over a multi-year study period) ☑

1. Within regular BDT activity (indicate which programmes, activities,   
   projects, etc., will be involved in the work of the study Question):

– Programmes: Digital inclusion ☑

– Projects □

– Expert consultants □

– Regional offices □

1. In other ways – describe (e.g. regional, within other   
   organizations with expertise, jointly with other

organizations, etc.): To be defined in the work plan. □

**b)** **Why?**

The Question will be addressed within ITU-D Study Group 1, in close cooperation with ITU-T Study Group 16 (Question 26/16).

**9** **Coordination and collaboration**

Coordination is recommended with relevant international and regional organizations, and with service providers that have adopted best practices to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs and facilitate their access to telecommunications/ICTs

**10** **BDT programme link**

To be defined in the workplan.

**11** **Other relevant information**