

Thank you to the two WSIS+20 Co-Facilitators, the Ambassadors from Albania and Kenya, and also to the **Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board (IMSB)**, for holding this consultation and for ensuring that the voices of civil society, the technical community, academic community and the private sector are always included.

My name is Judith Hellerstein, and I will be speaking as one of the two Coordinators of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD).

The position of [IGF-DCAD](#) is that despite years of advocacy, the digital divide facing persons with disabilities is only mentioned tangentially throughout the WSIS+20

If WSIS+20 is to fulfil its promise of a “people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society,” disability inclusion must move from footnotes to the main agenda.

The text is filled with grand ambitions for a “people-centred, inclusive” internet, tackling everything from AI governance to digital finance. But there is very little about persons with disabilities and no mentions of having persons with lived in experience of disabilities

For twenty years, we have built a digital world that has systemically excluded 1.5 billion people. The digital divide is not only about rural connectivity or 4G access; it is about the millions of uncaptioned videos, unnavigable websites, and inaccessible apps that define the online experience for users with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive disabilities.

The WSIS+20 document itself, in Paragraph 66, although reaffirms the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as an indivisible part of international human rights law. The legal imperative could not be clearer. When public digital infrastructure is inaccessible, the issue is not merely poor design; it is a violation of human rights.

In our response to Rev 1, we noted that several areas to be improved and offered textual comments such as the following

Para 22, why we mention the CRPD and the desire for all things to be accessible we do not focus on the implementation or requirement of accessibility standards and guidelines or on the adoption and enforcement of international accessibility standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1/2.2) and this should be added.

In Para 27—When we speak of local content, we also need the following text--to ensure that these are delivered in formats compatible with accessible technologies (e.g., screen

readers, captions, sign language, simplified language) to also meet the needs of persons with disabilities.”

In Para 38 under emergency services please add-- we further commit to ensuring that such systems and interventions are also accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities; and that early warning communications, evacuation processes, recovery tools and digital information channels adhere to accessibility standards and assistive technology compatibility.

In Para 39. To ensure accessibility for all, please add the following to the end of the paragraph--We further commit to ensuring that such systems and interventions are also accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities; and that early warning communications, evacuation processes, recovery tools and digital information channels adhere to accessibility standards and assistive technology compatibility

In the capacity building section – Para 60—we should add the following-- to ensure that efforts be made to co-design and deliver digital capacity building and leadership development programs for persons with disabilities, ensuring that their lived experience informs policymaking, especially in emerging areas like AI, cybersecurity, and data governance

Para 86—In launching any new fellowship please also ensure that persons with disabilities are included-- This should include the participation of persons with disabilities, both as beneficiaries and contributors, and establish leadership pathways for experts with lived experience of disability to shape inclusive and ethical AI governance frameworks.

Para 90 – please add the following text after the end of the paragraph--- persons with disabilities, particularly those with lived experience, not only as beneficiaries but as equal contributors and leaders in Internet governance and standard-setting bodies.

Para 116—We we talk about metrics, but we should also include a discussion about indicators and metrics for the reporting of disability-disaggregated data on digital access, usage, accessibility, and affordability, in line with CRPD obligations. So we request this sentence be added to this paragraph.

The WSIS+20 review presents a historic opportunity to move beyond tokenism and enshrine digital accessibility at the heart of a truly inclusive Information Society. Without explicit commitments and concrete actions for persons with disabilities, and without the

active leadership of people with lived experience of disability, the vision of universal, meaningful, and affordable access cannot be realized.

As one of the Coordinators of the IGF DCAD, I urge the co-facilitators and all stakeholders to ensure that accessibility and the inclusion of people with disability are not afterthoughts, but core priorities reflected throughout the WSIS+20 outcome documents and in the future mandate of the IGF. Only by doing so, can we build a multistakeholder, inclusive governance model that serves the needs of all people and sets a precedent for equitable global digital policymaking.