**Report of the fifth meeting of the
Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)**

**(Baku, Azerbaijan, 8 November 2012)**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) was formed during the second Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 2007. Since then, DCAD works to ensure that ICT accessibility is included in discussions related to Internet governance, aiming to create a future in where all individuals have equal access to the opportunities presented by our Information Society. DCAD aims to facilitate interaction between relevant bodies and to ensure that ICT accessibility is included in the debates around the Internet Governance. The DCAD has now around 30 members made up of individuals, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, academia and experts with disabilities.

During the IGF 2012, DCAD held its fifth face-to-face meeting on 8 November 2012, during the seventh annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF), at the Baku Expo Convention Center, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The meeting attracted about ten participants, four of which were online.

**DISCUSSIONS AND MAIN OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS**

The meeting was chaired by Mr Peter Major, DCAD Co-coordinator, assisted by Mr Shadi
Abou-Zahra, W3C, Web Accessibility Initiative, Austria and the DCAD Coordinator, Ms Andrea Saks participated on remote mode.

The meeting began with an introduction of DCAD and approval of the agenda which is available [here](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cgaspari%5CDocuments%5C.%20http%3A%5Cwww.itu.int%5Cthemes%5Caccessibility%5Cdc%5Cmeetings%5C005.html). The discussions highlighted the review of the accessibility facilities at the Seventh IGF, in Baku, Azerbaijan. One of the most important goals for the fifth face-to-face meeting of DCAD was to review the participation of persons with disabilities to the main session on access and diversity.

Beside the DCAD meeting agenda, the discussion of the meeting focused on some aspect of malfunction of the remote tools and remote participation:

Some complaints were made on the choice of WebEx as the remote conferencing tool chosen by the IGF secretariat. There were several limitations of functionality which directly negatively impacted persons with disabilities and prevented some from participating remotely, as well as restricting the participation from others online because of those limitations. To take one example, there were serious difficulties regarding web access on the WebEx that made it difficult for blind persons to participate as they could not navigate to raise hands to comment or even call in. The conditions of the onsite facilities of the conference centre were also discussed during the meeting.

Some participants felt that the recommendations that DCAD submits for the host countries every year regarding accessibility were not completely taken into account or implemented. Some participants expressed their difficulties to use the basic facilities provided at the IGF venue. There were persons with disabilities who unfortunately could not fully participate in all the events because of these impediments.

It was noted that there were cable covers on the floor that obstructed safe passage and this was a problem for everybody, not only for persons with disabilities with and without wheel chairs. Where lunch was provided there were only standing high tables. This made impossible for persons with wheel chairs to be seated at a table they could not reach and have lunch. This was not only a barrier to eating but made it impossible to participate in conversation over lunch comfortably. There also were insufficient accessible washrooms and toilets.

DCAD Co-Coordinator, Mr Peter Major and Mr Shadi Abou Zahra highlighted that the host country really worked hard resolving issues regarding logistics. This included trying to solve problems regarding hotel accommodation and transportation. Many of the participants agreed that overall there were considerable improvements over the last IGF meeting regarding accessibility to the meeting rooms and buildings. They concluded that the host country did their best in trying to rectify mistakes when they were pointed out.

**CONCLUSIONS**

DCAD will create a list of observations and update its recommendations, adding some new points in its version two report to IGF and be submitted after its next meeting. Highlighting the accessibility problems of the IGF meeting and remote participation were in fact a major subject of the DCAD meeting. The main conclusion of the meeting was the need for the IGF secretariat to use DCAD expertise as a resource in planning with the Hosts, as agreed in the previous IGF meetings, is very important.

**THE MAIN SESSION on ACCESS and DIVERSITY**The main session on Access and Diversity was a three hours session. There were five main topics.

Free flow of information, Infrastructure, Mobile and innovation, Women’s empowerment and Multilingualism. Mr Peter Major represented DCAD as a panelist. Mr Shadi Abou-Zahra also representing DCAD participated from the floor.

There was a scheduling problem with regarding to the timing of the DCAD meeting, in respect to the timing of the Main session. The DCAD meeting was given a time slot after the Main Session on Access and Diversity. Although a request was made to the IGF secretariat, DCAD was not granted a time to have its meeting scheduled prior to the main session. This made it difficult for DCAD to draw its conclusions and prepare a proposal to be presented to the main session on Access and Diversity, on the subject of accessibility.

It was observed that there were too many people on the panel and it was very difficult for the general public to follow the many topics discussed. Mr Major highlighted the role of the UNCRDP and the importance of ICTs as tools necessary for inclusion into society for all users.

Although DCAD was asked to create and did submit specific questions to the panel, those questions were not raised or addressed during the discussion itself. At the meeting the year before in 2011 DCAD was recognized to be the resource to assist the host country in making sure that the Venue and the tools used for remote were accessible.

The lessons learnt in previous meetings should be applied in the planning of the next IGF meeting. Accessibility and DCAD should always be included in the main session on Access and Diversity for this reason. It would allow DCAD to give a report on the accessibility issues and successes of the facilities of the conference itself. There is another reason. Accessibility issues always will affect every one of the topics discussed during any main session on Access and Diversity.

**Conclusions**

There were many varied subjects discussed which affected the structure of the main session. There were too many panelists in the main session and that contributed to the lack of cohesion. Having fewer panelists to reduce duplication and sticking to the questions given in advance might have helped to control the information flow of the session.

There was also a problem regarding the procedure of the participation of the remote participants. There is a need for more training for remote moderators when using remote tools. Blind persons often cannot use the current remote tools as DCAD has reported.

There was an incident confusing one person with one another person who spoke in place of a recognized participant. It was a blind DCAD member, who had been recognized by both his first and last name. Another person took his place. It was unfortunate that both participants had similar first names. It was for the very reason because this participant was blind and could not signal the remote coordinators as the WebEx chat box was not very accessible, he was denied his rightful turn to speak. He found it once to ask but could not find it again as it meant he would have to switch off the session to use his screen reader to find it again. As screen readers speak to the user and one cannot two audio channels speaking at the same time.

Training for identification of remote speakers and how to handle persons with disabilities in remote situations needs to be improved so this does not happen in the future. DCAD wants to help define some of these procedures.

**Other conclusions re accessibility**

Meetings were delayed or interrupted because of accessibility problems. Testing tools and whether everyone can get on remotely before the sessions starts - is paramount. Sometimes we need to use emails to do this in advance. Several participants took the initiative during the meeting to exchange several emails in order to solve captioning problems and identify WebEx tool malfunctions. These real time problems delays and their solutions actually became a part of the discussions of the DCAD meeting. DCAD wants to stress that the technical department from the IGF staff was very successful in resolving many of these issues because of these emails, with the exception of the built in problems of WebEX

It was thought that DCAD delegates didn´t have a lot of visibility this year. Remote participation was not as successful as had been hoped. There were too few DCAD members presenting in person at the conference. With the difficulty in presenting remotely and the delays that this brought a lot of time was lost cutting short some of the presentations.

During the next meeting of DCAD, members will continue the discussion re the accessibility of this past meeting. The plan is to further refine the accessibility guidelines for accessible IGF meetings in the future and write a checklist to be implemented by IGF for host countries. This will help host countries and others organize accessible meetings. The subject of the choice of remote tools with the pros and cons of each different one needs to be studied in depth. This will also be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr Chengetai Masango (IGF Secretariat) has in the past recognized DCAD and its representatives to be the real experts on accessibility issues, especially in the area of organizing IGF meetings. He has been supportive of using DCAD as a resource to continue to make IGF meetings more and more accessible in the future. This really needs to be implemented from an early stage in the planning with the next host.

The DCAD members agreed to have a meeting in either 6 or 7 February 2013, before the planned MAG meeting (28 February -1 March 2013).

More information can be found on the [DCAD website](http://www.itu.int/themes/accessibility/dc)

**DCAD EVENTS PRESENTED**

DCAD organized the following events for the IGF meeting of 2012:

1. Workshop no. 129: *Sustainable benefits of inclusion on the Internet*, DCAD, 7 November 2012;
2. Workshop no. 52: Joint Workshop on *remote participation reality and principles*, organized by the Diplo-Foundation and DCAD, 9 November 2012.

**IGF Workshop no. 52: Joint Workshop on Remote Participation reality and principles**

The workshop jointly organized with the Diplo Foundation and DCAD was held on the last day of the IGF meeting, on 9 November 2012.

This workshop focused on the current reality of remote participation and how remote participation is usually organized. The participants highlighted the need for active remote participation in conferences rather than passive remote observation.

The workshop stressed the importance of including participants especially Persons with Disabilities. It was stressed in the discussion the need for all to be able to use reliable transparent remote communication tools. These ideas and concepts are the basis for the development of principles and guidelines that should underline and define remote participation strategies in the future. This especially impacts the quality of the attendance and real time participation of persons with disabilities.

During the workshop, each presenter focused on a chosen subject regarding remote participation. They included the viewpoints of previous IGF meetings. They dealt with subjects of access and disability, remote participation, business, government, capacity building and the encouragement of youth in particular.

The goal of the workshop was to demonstrate the need of a completely online workshop which could serve as an example for future conferences. DCAD was represented by Mr Fernando Botelho Dynamic Coalition on Access and Diversity representative, (Brazil), with his presentation on Enabling Social and Labor Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through Low-Cost Assistive Technologies and Interoperability. Mr Botelho focused his presentation on the impact of the financial impact of related costs and savings that remote participation affects.

The other panelists of the joint workshop were as following:

Raquel Gatto, (moderator / remote moderator) Remote participation working group representative, Ginger Paque, (moderator / remote moderator) DiploFoundation representative, Rodney Taylor, Caribbean Telecommunications Union representative, Ulkar Bayramova, Judy Okite, DCAD and Biljana Glisovic, EUnet, Remote Hub.

**THANKING NOTES**

DCAD would like to thank IGF and the host country and the beautiful of Baku, for always providing captioning, and making a big effort to make IGF meetings accessible. DCAD would like to thank all the remote moderators and our DCAD moderator, Judy Okite, Rachel Gatto and Ginger Paque for their help and expertise in remote participation.

A special thank goes to Bernard Sadaka and his team who promptly managed and solve many of the accessibility issues quickly and efficiency.

Special thanks go also to Chengetai Masango for his understanding and his continued support in making IGF accessible.

**IGF Workshop no. 129**

A separate report has been submitted to IGF.

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