G3ict The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs

A Flagship Advocacy Initiative of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development

Why Do We Need i-access?

Policy Perspectives

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i-access Conference 2011

Copenhagen, Denmark

June 22-24, 2011

G3ict Mission

"To Facilitate the Implementation of the Digital Accessibility Agenda Defined by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"

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The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006
- Universal framework for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities
- 8th Universal Convention on Human Rights and 1st of this millennium
- 149 countries have signed it as of June 2011 – 90 with the Optional Protocol
- 101 have ratified it, representing over 70% of the World Population

What is unique about the Convention?

- **Both a *policy development* and a *Human Rights* instrument**
- **A *policy instrument* which is cross-disability and cross-sectorial**
- **A Treaty which is *legally binding***

http://www.un.org/disabilities

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Accessibility in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Preamble (v):

"Recognizing the importance of accessibility to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communication, in enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms".

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The Pervasive Impact of ICTs on All Aspects of Life

- **A Massive Increase in ICT usage:**
  - **1.3 billion personal computers**
  - **1.8 + billion Internet users (incl. shared / mobile access)**
  - **1.4 billion telephone land lines**
  - **2.4 billion TV sets and 2.4 billion radios**
  - **5.4 billion cell phones, over 2 billion text messaging users**

➡ **Major impact of ICT accessibility on education, economic, government relations and cultural opportunities**

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Accessibility : ICTs On Par with Physical Environment & Transportation

« To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, *to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems…* » (Article 9)

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Dispositions with Implications for ICT Accessibility and Assistive Technologies

Application Areas	CRPD Article	Accessibility dispositions with implications for ICTs	Reasonable Accommodation	Promoting Assistive Technologies
Non discrimination	5		✓	
E-Government	9.2.a	✓		
Media and Internet	9.1, 9.2.g	✓		
Television	30.1.b	✓		
Private Sector Services	9.2.b	✓		
Liberty and Security	14		✓	
Living independently	19			✓
Education	24	✓	✓	✓
Employment	27	✓	✓	
Political Rights	21, 29	✓		✓
Emergency services	9.1.b, 11	✓		
Culture & Leisure	30.5.c	✓		
Personal Mobility	20			✓
Rehabilitation	2			✓

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Article 24 on Education – Dispositions on Alternative Communications

- **Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;**
- **Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;**
- **Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual;**
- **Employing teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education.**
- **Training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.**

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Reasonable Accommodation Defined and Mandated

- **"Reasonable accommodation" means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 2)**
- **General obligation and condition for non-discrimination**
- **Referenced in articles on education and employment**

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Special Dispositions Promoting Accessible & Assistive Technologies

1. Mandate to promote R&D
2. ICT Product Development and Universal Design
3. Obligation for States to set accessibility standards
4. Intellectual property rights
5. Promoting New Media and the Internet for Persons with Disabilities

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Is it Working? 33 States Parties Surveyed by G3ict in 2010

Argentina	El Salvador	Portugal
Austria	France	Rwanda
Bangladesh	Germany	South Africa
Belgium	Guinea	Spain
Brazil	Hungary	Thailand
Burkina Faso	India	Tunisia
Canada	Kenya	Uganda
Chile	Mali	United Kingdom
China	Mexico	United States
Costa Rica	Moroco	Yemen
Denmark	Nicaragua	Zambia

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General Legal and Regulatory Framework: Progressive Alignment with CRPD

- **91% have a constitutional article, law or regulation defining the rights of persons with disabilities**
- **72% have a definition of "Reasonable Accommodation" included in any law or regulation regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **56% have a definition of accessibility which includes ICTs or electronic media in the country laws or regulations**

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Accessibility of Information Infrastructure: Lagging Behind

Percentage of CRPD States Parties with Policies implemented:

56% Television

56% Web sites

47% Fixed telephony

47% Mobile telephony

41% ATMs and electronic kiosks

38% Digital talking books

34% Public building displays

31% Transportation public address systems

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Accessibility Policies in Specific Areas: High in Education and Rehabilitation but Low for Mainstream Public Services

78% **Primary and secondary education**

72% **Higher education**

63% **Rehabilitation services**

59% **Health services**

59% **Reasonable accommodation at work**

50% **Emergency services**

44% **Voting systems**

44% **Judicial information & legal proceedings**

38% **Community services**

34% **Independent living**

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Affordability of Assistive Technologies Remains a Key Obstacle

- **Example: availability of Assistive Technologies at Major Universities:**
  - **Worldwide average: 61%**
  - **Developed countries: 82%**
  - **Least Developed Countries: 25%**

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Affordability of Assistive Technologies: an Unfulfilled Mandate of the CRPD

What the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities says:

States Parties are committed to:

"Undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and *assistive technologies*, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies *at an affordable cost*" Art. 4 (g)

"Facilitating access by persons with disabilities to quality mobility aids, devices, *assistive technologies* and forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including by *making them available at affordable cost*" Art. 20 (b)

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New Paradigms for Assistive Technologies in Education

- **Mainstream products accessibility features (Example Microsoft Office)**
- **Mobile platform**
  - Universal availability with unprecedented economies of scale and apps distribution
  - Example: scanner + OCR (Optical Character Recognition) + Text-to-Speech for instant reading aloud
  - Creative solutions for young persons with disabilities (99 apps for the Classroom Report)
- **Cloud computing**

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The Potential of Cloud Computing for Assistive Technologies in Education

- **Assistive Technologies made available over the Cloud can help resolve the cost barrier**
- **Simplifies the funding and deployment of assistive technologies**
- **Universal Access, anytime anywhere on any device**
- **Personalized profile for persons with accessibility challenges**
- **A Universal blueprint applicable around the world in both developed and developing countries**

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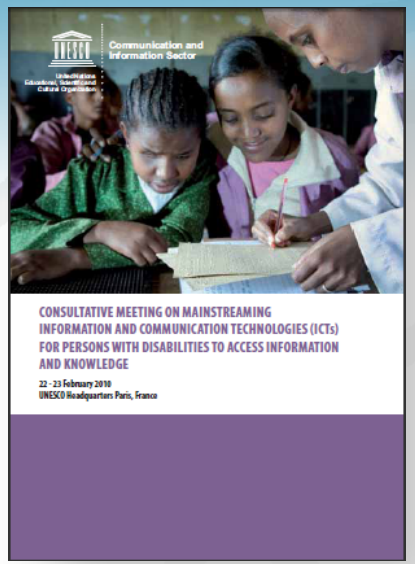
CRPD Opportunities

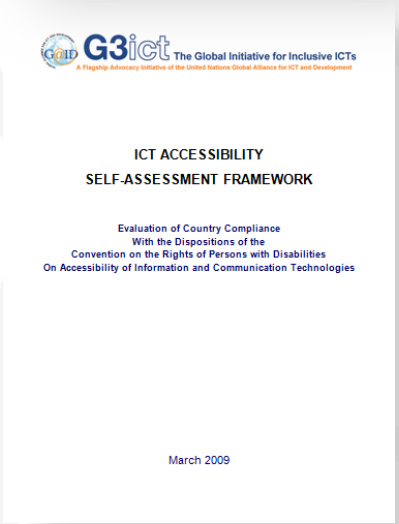
- CRPD Framework adopted universally, opening the door for global standardization of solutions
- Solutions for education exist and are being implemented in multiple countries
- New technology will continue to lower costs and improve
- Standards development
- International cooperation and best practices sharing

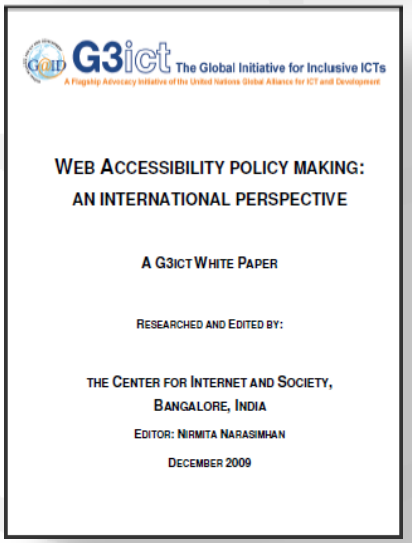
International Cooperation on ICT Accessibility – G3ict Programs

- Global network of volunteer experts from the private sector, DPOs, international institutions and governments
- Knowledge sharing platform: www.g3ict.org
- E-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities (with ITU): www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org
- Capacity building programs in cooperation with international institutions (UNDESA, ITU, UNESCO, UNESCAP, World Bank), governments, academia
- Books and publications
- Research

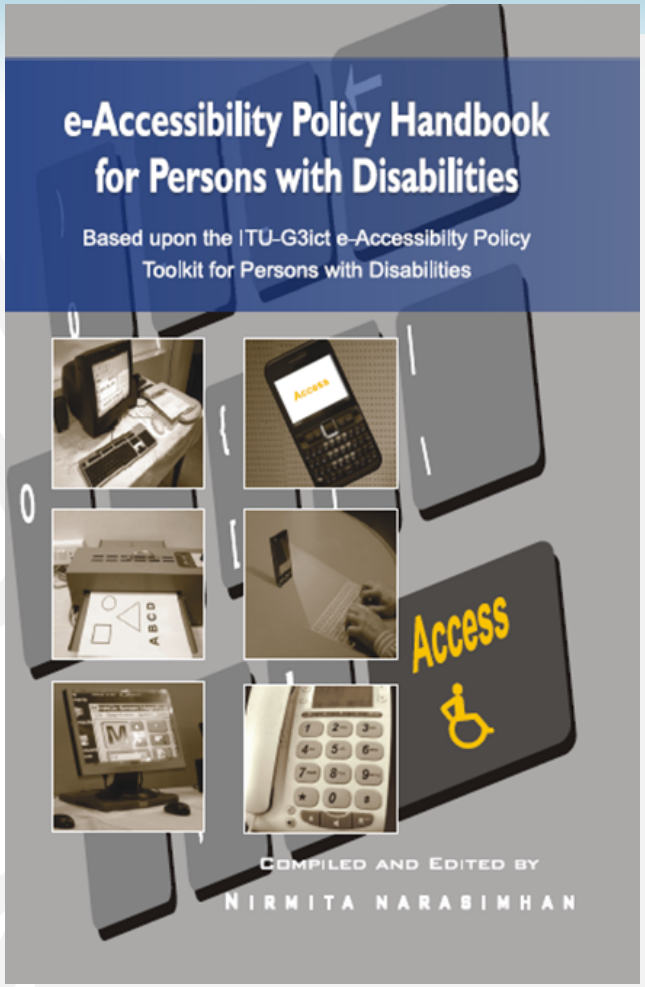
Books and Publications







New Delhi Launch October 27, 2010:



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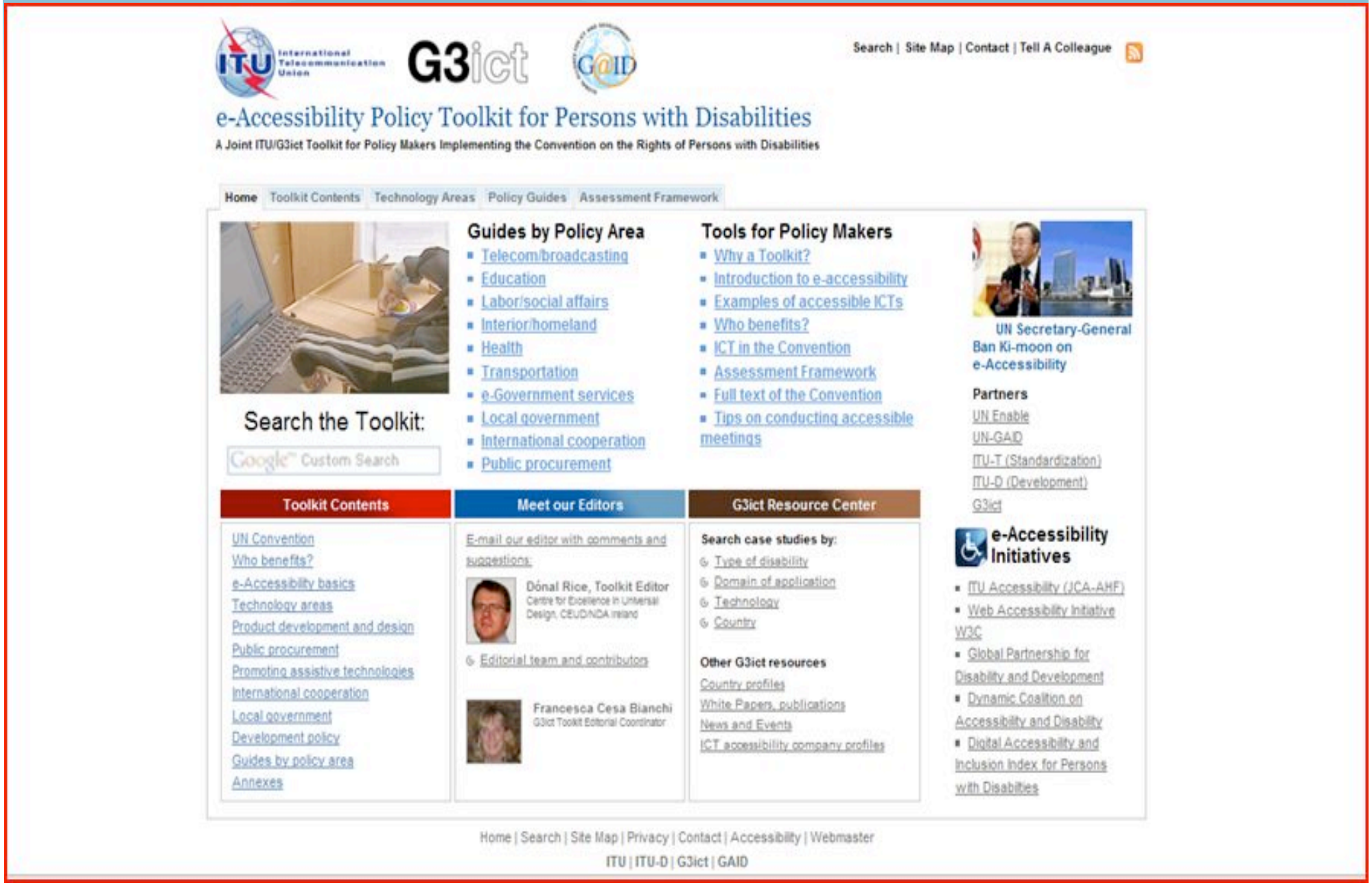

Thank You / Mange Tak

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CRPD References

On Special Dispositions

Promoting Accessible and Assistive ICTs

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1 - Promoting R&D for Assistive Technologies

States Parties…undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies at an affordable cost (Article 4 – g)

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2 - ICT Products Development

- **Early Stage Accessibility Definitions:**
  - "Promote the design, development, production and distribution of ***accessible information and communications technologies and systems*** at an ***early stage***, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost" (Art. 9)
- **Universal Design:**
  - "To ***undertake or promote research and development of universally designed*** goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines" (Art. 4)

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3 - Standards

« States Parties shall take…appropriate measures to develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public »

Article 9-2 (a)

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4 - Intellectual Property Rights

"States Parties shall take all appropriate steps, in accordance with international law, to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials."

(Article 30 on Cultural life)

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5 - New Media and the Internet

« States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to…promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet »

Article 9 (g)

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