# Promoting ICT Accessibility With UNESCO

UNESCO Session
Internet Governance Forum
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Axel Leblois

# Disabled Persons and the Internet

*"If anybody asks me what the Internet means to me, I will tell him without hesitation: To me (a quadriplegic) the Internet occupies the most important part in my life. It is my feet that can take me to any part of the world; it is my hands which help me to accomplish my work; it is my best friend – it gives my life meaning."*

Dr. Zhang Xu Founder and Director of Bethesda Rehabilitation Ministry of Anshan, China

# Demographics

- ❖ **10% of the World Population lives with life long disabilities: vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive**
  - ▸ 680,000,000 persons

- ❖ **18% if temporary or age related disabilities are included**
  - ▸ 1,232,000,000 persons

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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**

- ❖ **146 countries have signed it as of September 2009**

- ❖ **90 have ratified it, representing 72% of the World Population**

- ❖ **ICT Accessibility including the Internet and new media defined and mandated**

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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 | | | ✓ |

# Additional Dispositions Important in the Context of UNESCO's Mandates

1. **Reasonable accommodation mandated in education**

2. **Obligation for States to set accessibility standards**

3. **Intellectual property rights**

4. **Promoting New Media and the Internet for Persons with Disabilities**

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# Measuring Ratifying Countries Progress in Promoting ICT Accessibility

- ❖ **% of Countries Surveyed by G3ict with Policies Covering ICT Accessibility:**
  - ▸ **78% Primary and secondary education**
  - ▸ **72% Higher education**
  - ▸ **56% Television**
  - ▸ **56% Web sites**
  - ▸ **44% Voting systems**
  - ▸ **38% Digital Talking Books**

Source: 2010 Survey of 31 ratifying countries

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# But...

❖ **87% do not have statistics or data accessible for the general public about digital access by persons with disabilities**

❖ **Actual implementation seems to be lagging considerably**

❖ **Level of awareness of CRPD and its ICT accessibility dispositions still low**

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# UNESCO – G3ict Partnership

- ❖ **Facilitation of the implementation of the Digital Accessibility Agenda defined by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

- ❖ **Identification, collection and sharing of data and information including good practices and solutions**

- ❖ **Contribute to strategic planning and development of a framework to monitor the needs and implementation processes of States Parties to the UN Convention**

- ❖ **Examination of existing and new accessible and assistive solutions for core applications**

- ❖ **Cooperation to stage events, meetings and projects, including a 2010 consultative meeting with "White paper" summarizing its findings (published)**

# February 2010 UNESCO – G3ict Consultative Meeting Report

❖ **Recommendations derived from meeting by UNESCO:**

1. **Making UNESCO itself ICT accessible**

2. **Mainstreaming ICT in inclusive education**

3. **Mobilizing resources and international cooperation for capacity building for policy makers**

4. **Creating an accessible information and knowledge ecosystem**

❖ **Full report available at:**

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001892/189237e.pdf

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# Practical Steps with High Potential Impact in 2010 - 2011

- ❖ **Measuring**

- ❖ **Capacity building for policy makers**

- ❖ **Tools and curricula for educators**

- ❖ **Mainstreaming ICT accessibility in all aspects of UNESCO's work and programs**

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