United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

**Outcome Document – The New Delhi Declaration
on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities:
Making Empowerment a Reality**

**Adopted by the participants
in the International Conference**

**From Exclusion to Empowerment:
Role of ICTs for Persons with Disabilities
24 – 26 November 2014, New Delhi, India**

PREAMBLE

1. ***Having in mind*** the first Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that *"all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"*,

2. ***Having heard the message***, specially recorded for this International Conference in New Delhi from Cambridge University by Professor Stephen Hawking, one of the world's greatest scientists, who suffers from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), *"Please listen to me; I am speaking for the people you cannot hear..... without technology I would not be able to ask for a cup of tea, let alone speak of my theory of the universe"*,

3. ***Warmly thanking*** the Government of India for hosting this international conference and applauding The Honorable Prime Minister of India announcement of a nationwide campaign for a "Digital India" which would bring ICTs to the doorstep of every Indian citizen, including those with disabilities,

4. ***Considering that over 1 billion*** individuals – 15% of the world's population – have some form of disability and that therefore the full inclusion and equal participation of persons with disabilities is absolutely necessary to the UN post-2015 development agenda,

5. ***Recalling*** the several declarations culminating in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenants on Human Rights (1945), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), and other relevant normative instruments, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006),

6. ***Affirming*** that universal access to information and knowledge**,** using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and assistive technologies (AT)**,** on an equal basis with others, for persons with disabilities is both an inalienable human right and precondition to live independently and participate fully and equally in society,

7. ***Quoting*** *Mr Lenin Moreno,* the United Nations Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility *"Scientific and technological development specific for persons with disabilities, including the development of inclusive, affordable and appropriate technologies, should enable the full enjoyment of their human rights and freedoms to the highest extent"*,

8. ***Supporting the sense of urgency*** expressed in United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/Res/69/142 *"Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond"*,

9. ***Repeating*** the resolve of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society *"to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge"*,

10. ***Reasserting the overall commitment*** to the World Summit on the Information Society (2003) Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Declaration (2005), the WSIS Review Process, the Marrakesh *Treaty* to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (2013), the Outcome Document of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the Realization of the MDGs (2013), the UN CRPD General Comment on Accessibility (2014) and other internationally agreed development goals and normative instruments,

11. ***Reaffirming*** that UNESCO is one of the United Nations system agencies actively involved in promoting disability rights and implementing the UN CRPD, in co-operation with national governments, the scientific community, civil society, industry partners and other international and UN system organizations,

12. ***Applauding*** the initiative of the '*We Care*' film festival to commit its twelve years' experience to the Conference's cause, because film and media of all kinds (including social media) play a key cultural and attitudinal role in shaping the way that societies treat disability issues,

13. ***Convinced*** that the New Delhi Conference addressed a unique combination of issues facing people with disabilities, encapsulating the critical causes of their disempowerment – denial of equal human rights, exclusion from educational and learning opportunities, the particular vulnerability of the elderly, women and children, the aggravating impact of poverty especially in remote and rural areas,

14. ***Inspired*** by factual evidence of cutting-edge technology geared towards enabling persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, as the many examples presented in this conference, we commit to the development of inclusive ICTs as a gateway to knowledge, facilitating the journey from exclusion to empowerment within knowledge societies.

Accordingly, we the participants

CALL UPON THE WORLD COMMUNITY TO USE THEIR ENERGIES AND ABILITIES TO

1. Help change mindsets and attitudes by raising public awareness of the need for a more inclusive and human rights ["us" rather "them"] oriented approach to disability issues rather than a fundamentally medical approach,
2. Contribute to an environment of transparency, accountability, trust and inclusion among all stakeholders where key issues and possible solutions are discussed, as a matter of urgency, frankly and creatively, but also realistically and systematically,
3. Acknowledge the diversity of disability and the requirement for differentiated solutions to meet the needs and demands of persons with disabilities,
4. Design and implement specific programmes targeted at elderly people, women, girls and all children with disabilities,
5. Recognize the need to utilize advice and experience from people with disabilities in the design and production of mainstream and assistive products and services, incorporating this requirement from the outset rather than adding it as an afterthought,
6. Avoid discriminatory language, taking steps to combat negative attitudes, prejudices and stereotyping, in the recognition that these may engender and reflect exclusive mindsets,
7. Collect international best practices particularly dealing with legal, policy and regulatory factors impacting persons with disabilities, along with their rights and obligations,
8. Collaborate in the development of reliable, policy-oriented interdisciplinary statistical methodologies and in the collection of empirical, cost-effective and international comparative statistical evidence; this will involve sharing information, knowledge and experience – in the spirit of open access about the roll-out of specific ICT products and programmes as well as evidence on the usefulness of inclusive and accessible ICTs for persons with disabilities,
9. Recognize the obligations of the scientific and technological community to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and consult them on specifications for accessible, affordable and inclusive products, services and content taking into account "Universal Design for All" and "Open Access" principles.

CALL UPON GOVERNMENTS TO

1. Formulate national legal frameworks and mechanisms, policies, budgets, capacity plans and align them to provisions of the UN CRDP,
2. Adopt, implement and monitor national accessibility standards and measures including subsidies or fiscal relief to families which have people with disabilities,
3. Prioritize introducing legal frameworks and mechanisms to assure people with disabilities full participation in knowledge societies,
4. Fill data gaps, improve the quality of data collection and analysis, to inform policy and practice for effective solutions for persons with disabilities,

5. Encourage, stimulate, inspire and lead public and private partnerships aimed at the holistic inclusion of persons with disabilities in society,
6. Elaborate integrated plans to implement the above priorities which (a) covers all sectors where disability issues exist; (b) sets out specific targets and indicators; (c) demonstrates sustainability by capacity-building and technology transfer without which all efforts will fail or fade,
7. Make accessibility for persons with disabilities a required part of every procurement procedure, i.e. best practice within the civil service, when negotiating with private sector partners,
8. To act, when necessary, on the data evaluation from these performance reviews and to share their results with other governments and the international community, so that lessons can be learnt and a corpus of knowledge built up, about both capacity-building requirements and the development of specific ICT initiatives.

CALL UPON ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION - DECISION-MAKERS, PRACTITIONERS, TECHNICAL EXPERTS, FUNDERS AND ADMINISTRATORS – TO

1. Implement the pledge Education for All made at the two World Conferences (1990 and 2000) and through the Salamanca Statement (1994) aimed at ensuring that the curriculum, the teaching-learning process and the learning environment are truly inclusive of persons with disabilities,
2. Maximize value from international accessibility initiatives implemented by relevant public and private stakeholders who are targeting specific resources at the inclusion of persons with disabilities inside knowledge societies,
3. Address policy choices around the balance between establishing special schools for children with disabilities or including special needs education within mainstream educational settings in either case promoting development of appropriate professional skills and the most advanced mainstream and assistive technologies,
4. Appreciate – with regard to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) – that its full potential for persons with disabilities can only be realized through specific actions personalized and adapted to the nature of ODL teaching techniques,
5. Act on the fact that the physical educational settings, both formal and non-formal, are certainly not the only gateway to empowerment, both because a majority of those with disabilities live in the more remote areas of poorer countries and because advances in ICTs have brought open and distance learning within the grasp of adult learners worldwide,
6. Understand that obstacles to inclusion and empowerment exist not only for those who have disabilities from birth or early in life but also for the elderly when they come to experience reduced hearing, vision, mobility or manual dexterity; and that these difficulties may call for specialized assistive skills and resources,
7. Take into account cultural factors in certain communities, but emphasizing the inalienable human right to education, freedom of expression, information, employment and empowerment,
8. Recognize and advocate the important role the media (both institutional and social) and civil society generally can play in fostering positive constructive attitudes to people with disabilities, including appreciation of the individuality of people's needs together with the particular ICT and accessible information specifications for satisfying them.

WE CALL UPON CORPORATIONS OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF ICTS TO

1. Recognize the obligations of the business, scientific and technological community to familiarize themselves, on the ground, with the needs and views of persons with disabilities and involve them on specifications for accessible, affordable and inclusive products and services - taking into account "Universal Design for All" principles,
2. Acknowledge the size of the potential customer base which may well justify, strictly on commercial, profit-aligned criteria, the mainstreaming of products for people with disabilities, and specifically to develop techniques for automated data collection on web accessibility using self-help groups where appropriate,
3. Emphasize and stress to their executives and managers the growing importance of successfully negotiated public-private partnerships, based on fruitful relationships between corporations, government agencies, research institutes, the voluntary sector and end-users and targeted towards the holistic inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream life.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE UN SYSTEM

1. Give due weight to the outcomes of this international Conference in New Delhi and communicate the Conference Declaration to UNESCO's Member States and its governing bodies as well as to stakeholders in relevant intergovernmental programmes,
2. Integrate the recommendations of the international Conference in the development and implementation of specific programmes, strategies and plans, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of disability issues with the post-2015 UN Development Goals and poverty reduction objectives,
3. Encourage all relevant stakeholders to take appropriate measures to ensure access to information and knowledge, particularly educational, public information, cultural, scientific nature materials in accessible formats and apply appropriate technologies to different kinds of disabilities,
4. Harness national and international cooperation through strategic partnerships, existing multistakeholder mechanisms and structures aimed at the holistic inclusion of persons with disabilities,
5. Recognize and advocate the important role media can play in fostering positive constructive attitudes to people with disabilities,
6. Improve data collection and, where appropriate, lead periodic reviews on the delivery, by all stakeholders, of the relevant international commitments and Conference recommendations.