**Second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals**

STI Forum - UN HQ, NYC, USA

May 15-16, 2017

**IDA representatives:**

Chancey Fleet, from the World Blind Union.

Avi Blau, from the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People.

**Report by:**

Avi Blau

**What is the STI forum 2017:**

As requested by the General Assembly resolution 70/1 on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the President of ECOSOC will convene the meetings of the STI forum once a year to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly also decided that the meetings of the forum will be co-chaired by two Member States and will result in a summary of discussions elaborated by the two co-Chairs.

The second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, on May 15 and 16, 2017.

The theme of the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", and the Member States have decided that the HLPF 2017 shall focus on six SDGs (1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14) in addition to SDG 17 that will be considered at each HLPF. In this context, the following topic have been considered in the STI Forum 2017: "**Science, Technology and Innovation for a Changing World - Focus on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14**".

The UN Inter-Agency Task Team on STI for SDGs (IATT) was mandated to work with the 10 representatives from civil society, private sector and scientific community to prepare the STI Forum. H.E. Mr. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, the President of ECOSOC, reappointed H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations and Dr. Vaughan Turekian, the Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State, to act as co-chairs for the 2017 STI forum.

**Preparations:**

In the week before the STI forum 2017, a team of several persons, with the lead of Orsolya Bartha from IDA, worked on a position paper to represent Persons With Disability (PWD) positions on the issues of the STI in general and specifically on the SDGs that was going to be discussed this year.

See appendix 1 for the position paper.

**In the STI forum days:**

We had a full two days of lectures and events in the STI forum. Mostly in the main room and sometimes in side events in other rooms. There were many interesting lectures by many persons from different parts of the world. You can see the program of the forum in appendix 3. Wherever it was possible and relevant, At the Q&A time and during the discussions, we inserted comments about PWD. We tried to clarify that in the running forward with science and technology developments, in order to promote the SDGs, we have to be inclusive and take into account the needs of PWD. We emphasized the importance of the CRPD, that shows us how to be inclusive for PWD.

Our comments were accepted with much understanding and support. In several of the sessions summaries, the issue of PWD was mentioned. Most probably because of our comments.

The position paper that Orsolya had prepared before the STI forum started, was very helpful. The information in the position paper enable us to make good and facts based comments.

The written summary of the whole STI forum includes two places where PWD are mentioned (See appendix 2). We believe this is too, a result of our interventions.

**Accessibility:**

There was very good earphones and everyone spoke to the microphone, so it was possible for a hard of hearing person like me (Avi) to follow what was said. But there was no captions. I asked for it before the forum and I know that last year, at the STI forum 2016, there was captions. It is recommended to make sure, that next time there will be captions.

**Appendix 1**

The position paper that was prepared before the STI forum by Orsolya Bartha:

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| **Accessible Information Communication Technology and Assistive Technologies and Persons with Disabilities**    **INTRODUCTION**  In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), technology and accessibility can promote inclusion and help realize the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and shape the future of sustainable development for all. This is especially important since one billion persons with disabilities globally encounter widespread barriers or lack of accessibility in built environments, transport and information and communication services, including relevant information and communications technology (ICT). These barriers often deny persons with disabilities access and inclusion into mainstream society. Furthermore, without access to digital infrastructure and accessible ICT, persons with disabilities are at risk to be excluded from statistics and surveys used to develop future programs and policies.  The use of ICT and accessible and assistive technology (AT) improve the quality of life of persons and children with disabilities by increasing access to education, employment, community activities and other services. ICT is a critical driver to ensure that the SDGs are achieved for persons with disabilities, however, ICT can only effectively contribute to the realization of the SDGs if considered in line with Article 9 on Accessibility of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).  State parties to the CRPD have committed to ensure the right to access to ICT for persons with disabilities. It includes a commitment to “the strict application of universal design to all new goods, products, facilities, technologies and services should ensure full, equal and unrestricted access for all potential consumers, including persons with disabilities, in a way that takes full account of their inherent dignity and diversity. Accessibility of information and communication, including ICT, should also be achieved from the outset because subsequent adaptations to the Internet and ICT may increase costs.” The CRPD also highlights that the application of universal design makes society accessible for all human beings, not only persons with disabilities. But today the right to access even to digital infrastructure is often denied persons with disabilities. Even in countries with high levels of digital maturity, persons with disabilities living in special group homes are not given access to Internet, and without money to pay for equipment and online access, persons with disabilities are excluded.  As such, this paper explores the impact and benefits of policy and programmatic measures to improve the well-being and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development within the SDGs under review with linked recommendations.  **Goal 1 -** No Poverty - There are still more than two billion “unbanked” people in the world. Access to financial services has proven to be a pivotal step in helping people get out of poverty, and thanks to digital financial services, many are now participating in the digital economy for the first time.[1] Support to persons with disabilities in different dimensions should be addressed by States to ensure the most marginalized have access to finances and accessible services in governmental and public services. Innovative technologies provide different accessibility features that can be easily integrated into existing systems and with accessible e-commerce platforms provides support to micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities.[2]  **Goal 2 - Zero Hunger -** ICT gives farmers new ways of accessing information and services, including provision of extension services enhanced by mobile access to digital services, using technology to monitor farming practices and improving farmer/extension feedback.[3] ICT services and e-agriculture services should be accessible to persons with disabilities in all aspects including early-warning systems, disaster response and humanitarian aid in areas affected by natural disasters, and drought and food shortages to eradicate hunger and rural development.  **Goal 3 - Good Health and Well Being –** Direct patient interaction, health informatics and telemedicine can all be improved through better connectivity and accessibility. E-health is developing quickly around the world, yet universal design is seldom applied to these services. Persons with disabilities have lower life expectancy rates and lower perceived health than persons without disabilities. Access to various services and technologies are often prerequisites for persons with disabilities to work, participate in community life and access health care. Assistive technologies are evolving quickly and can increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. States should provide all the necessary support to both public and private service providers to ensure that assistive technologies are available and affordable to all persons with disabilities.  **Goal 5 - Gender Equality –** Target 5.b calls to enhance the use of enabling technologies and ICT to promote women’s empowerment, which includes women with disabilities who encounter multiple discrimination. It is also essential that all women not only benefit from technology, but also meaningfully participate in the process from design to application.[4] Only by closing the digital gender gap shall the full potential of ICT as a catalytic and transformative tool for sustainable development be realized.  **GOALS 9 and 14: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.** Technology is an expansive industry with potential for rapid change and growth for societies, and consequently many countries give substantial financial support to innovation. Although 173 countries have ratified the CRPD, universal design is not included in research development and innovation of mainstream technologies.    **RECOMMENDATIONS**   * International standards need to consistently include accessibility features and be implemented and licensed fairly to all organisations. * **States and partners must collaborate in fulfilling the obligations in relation to implementing and promoting universal design in research and development to enhance cost-efficient innovations, as stated in the CRPD.** * ICT manufacturers and service providers must strengthen direct involvement of persons with disabilities in development to improve design and development of accessible products and services, including testing methodologies. * Industry must ensure accessibility, conformity and interoperability of products and services. * Stakeholders involved in standardisation must take responsibility, cooperate globally and harmonize accessibility practices through standards development that includes resources for participation of persons with disabilities through their organisations. * Stimulating the introduction of ICT-enabled solutions adapted to the rights of persons with disabilities, increasing the availability of accessible ICT and promoting the affordability of assistive technologies in social, educational, economic and other domains. * **Ensure that tools and standards for universal design and accessibility are specified in procurement and financing of innovation programs for e-health, education, innovation programs and other relevant areas.** * **Ensure access to both public and back-end interfaces of ICT systems, products and services accessible to allow more persons with disabilities to obtain employment.** * **Ensure equal access to ICT for girls and women with disabilities. Promote inclusion of women with disabilities in education for ICT professionals.** * **Mainstream universal design approaches and accessibility in curricula for professionals, research and innovation programs and in procurement in both public and private organizations.** * **Ensure that accessibility is understood and addressed as another key characteristic of the digital environment aligned with the CRPD for full implementation of human rights.** * Mainstream a universally designed approach to policy makers, standardisers, developers, engineers, UX experts and more. * ICT players should have leadership roles inside organizations on accessibility and ensure that their staff are trained accordingly. * Protect the data of all citizens, in particular those of persons with disabilities, including those deprived of their legal capacity. * Promote and support accessible e-skills training programmes, in which the needs of persons with disabilities and older persons are taken into consideration, as well as the affordability of the accessible ICT solutions. * Develop and make use of independent quality certification on accessibility     [1] sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/blog2017/week6  [2] documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/896971468194972881/pdf/102725-PUB-Replacement-PUBLIC.pdf  [3] www.e-agriculture.org/news/using-icts-fight-hunger  [4] www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/Documents/WSIS-Women-Empowerment-Background.pdf |

**Appendix 2**

**Co-Chairs’ summary of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.**

Sections were PWD were mentioned:

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| ...  20. New innovation paradigms related to microelectronics, nanotechnology, fine chemicals, biotechnology and information technology are emerging in the health sector. They are based on partnerships between public, private and academic sectors, and they have the promise to improve health and well-being, while reducing the burden on health systems by reducing the need for hospitalization. **Governments should also provide support for inclusive technologies that benefit people with disabilities**.  ...  29. Multi-stakeholder collaboration on science, technology and innovation should be strengthened at all levels, with a focus on knowledge-sharing and voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and conditions. **Technology can be used to create opportunities for all people, including people with disabilities**, to capture the benefits of infrastructure development by voluntarily diffusing and adapting existing technologies. Initiatives are needed that bring together partners from Governments, the private sector and academia, as well as public-private partnerships, with Governments providing an enabling environment and the private sector investing, creating and innovating. New forms of learning, including early information and communications technology education, worldwide student exchanges and new approaches based on games and artificial intelligence, should be explored.  ... |

**Appendix 3**

Program of the STI forum 2017

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| First Day - May 15, 2017  10:00 AM - 10:30 AM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Welcome address and opening segment](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017)  10:35 AM - 10:40 AM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Video message from Mr. Bill Gates, Co-Chair, Melinda and Bill Gates](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  10:40 AM - 11:50 AM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 1: Harnessing STI for the SDGs –the key to unlocking STI potentials](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  11:50 AM - 1:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 2 a) Key priorities for engaging STI for ending poverty (Goal 1)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  11:50 AM - 1:00 PM Trusteeship Council, UNHQ [Session 2 b) Key priorities for engaging STI for ending hunger (Goal 2)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Launch of exhibition for innovative solutions to the SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 2 c) STI for healthy lives and well-being (Goal 3)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Trusteeship Council, UNHQ [Session 2 e) STI for the oceans, seas and marine resources for (Goal 14)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  4:30 PM - 6:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 2 d) STI for gender equality and empower women and girls ( Goal 5)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  4:30 PM - 6:00 PM Trusteeship Council, UNHQ [Session 2 f) STI for infrastructure, industrialization and innovation (Goal 9)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017)  SIDE EVENTS  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room E, UNHQ [Innovative systems science-based tools for sustainable development policy](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 11, UNHQ [The Swedish Model for Research Capacity Building](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 12, UNHQ [Implications of Technology and Innovation for the Future of manufacturing](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 7, UNHQ [Japan's SATREPS for co-creating global capacity and partnership in STI](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room B, UNHQ [Science, Engineering and Technology for Smart, Sustainable Cities](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM ECOSOC Chamber [Shaping a brave new future of work](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 6, UNHQ [STI roadmaps and instruments for achieving SDGs to 2030 and beyond](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:15 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Open Data and Open Science for the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room 8, UNHQ [Achieving SDGs with one platform - one solution - making impact count](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room B, UNHQ [Climate Smart](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room E, UNHQ [Community Networks for SDG9--Expand Internet Access from the Bottom-up](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room 6, UNHQ [Vision for Youth in Science, Technology & Innovation at the UN and Beyond](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room 12, UNHQ [Mobilising the global science community to support the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room 11, UNHQ [Access to Pharmaceuticals and Diagnostics - Innovations and Innovators](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room A, UNHQ [Women in science to achieve Sustainable Development Goals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017)  Second Day - May 16, 2017  10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 3: Improving the impact of STI on the SDGs – The cross cutting nature of STI](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 4: National STI plans and policies for achieving the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 5: STI capacity building for achieving the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Scaling up STI for SDGs: Impact Investing and Other Innovative Instruments](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 6: Emerging frontiers: Evolving STI developments with implications for SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  4:00 PM - 5:30 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Session 7: Supporting the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017)  5:30 PM - 6:00 PM Conference Room 4, UNHQ [Conclusions and way forward](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  SIDE EVENTS  8:00 AM - 9:30 AM Delegates Dining Hall [SDGs in Action: From Ideas to STI Solutions](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 12, UNHQ [Artificial i](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017)[ntelligence & Technology Tools for Mental Health, Well-being, and Resilience](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 1:30 PM Conference Room B, UNHQ [GOATS scanning the horizon! Overview of Technology: evaluating STI for SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 11, UNHQ [Higher Education in conflict & crisis – SDGs in situations of displacement](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room 7, UNHQ [Innovation strategies: Designing national policies that use innovation to meet the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  1:15 PM - 2:30 PM Conference Room A, UNHQ [Women, Girls, and Science: Contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room B, UNHQ [Staying Afloat: Building Resilience in a Changing World (using Oceans as a Case Study)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#)  6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Conference Room A, UNHQ [World Café Workshop – A Knowledge Systems Approach to Achieving the SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017) |