

**Summary of Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 2 (2014) on Article 9: Accessibility**

**Introduction**

The CRPD Committee’s General Comment No. 2 (2014) on Article 9 (Accessibility) emphasizes that accessibility is a fundamental precondition for their full and equal participation in society. The document elaborates on the normative content of Article 9, states' obligations, and the relationship of accessibility with other articles of the Convention, stressing the collaborative approach needed with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in developing and enforcing accessibility standards.

**Fundamental importance of accessibility:** Accessibility is established as essential for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in society, underpinning the freedom of movement and access to information as fundamental human rights. The disability rights movement has historically advocated for accessibility as a foundational element of equal participation. (Paragraphs 1-4)

**Definitions and scope:** The General Comment emphasizes the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in enhancing accessibility, and highlights previous recommendations from the CRPD and other treaty bodies and outlines the rationale for adopting a general comment on accessibility. (paragraphs 5-12). It defines the scope of accessibility, including the physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and public services. The importance of universal design, the removal of barriers, and the necessity of considering gender and age perspectives are highlighted. The distinction between accessibility (broad and proactive measures) and reasonable accommodation (individual and reactive measures) is clarified. (Paragraphs 13-26).

The General Comment outlines the obligations of States to ensure accessibility, not just in public spaces but also in private ones if they are open to the public, underlining that accessibility is not dependent on the legal personality or the nature of the ownership of buildings, transport, or services (para 13). It stresses the need for the systematic, gradual, and continuously monitored removal of barriers to achieve full accessibility (para 14) and underscores the application of universal design principles to ensure accessibility for all, including persons with disabilities (para 15).

The General Comment clarifies that accessibility serves groups of individuals, distinguishing it from reasonable accommodation, which is tailored to individual needs. It requires States to proactively meet accessibility standards without waiting for individual requests (para 25).

**Obligations of States Parties:** States are required to adopt, monitor, and enforce accessibility standards in close consultation with persons with disabilities. This includes addressing barriers in public services, ICT, and transportation, among others. The development of minimum standards for accessibility, the prohibition of discrimination based on disability, and the incorporation of accessibility into public procurement processes are stressed. (paragraphs 27-33).

It highlights the necessity of adopting, promoting, and enforcing national accessibility standards across various sectors and in consultation with persons with disabilities (paras 27-28). It also discusses the importance of incorporating accessibility into laws on equal opportunities and the provision of effective legal remedies for discrimination based on lack of access (para 29).

The General Comment outlines the need for setting minimum standards for accessibility in services offered by both public and private entities and stresses the importance of international cooperation in promoting accessibility standards (paras 30-32). It calls for States to develop action plans, allocate resources for removing barriers, and establish robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of accessibility measures (para 33).

**Relationship with other Articles of the CRPD:** The document elaborates on how accessibility intersects with various rights guaranteed by the CRPD, including the right to education, health, employment, participation in political and public life, and cultural life. It underlines the importance of international cooperation in promoting accessibility and the role of national monitoring frameworks including through organizations of persons with disabilities. (paragraphs 34-48).