

14th session of the Conference of States Parties to the
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP14)

United Nations Headquarters, New York
14-17 June 2021

# Side Event Concept Note

# Digital Accessibility: Strategies Towards Ensuring the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Post-Pandemic Building Better Efforts

## Introduction

During the 14th session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), G3ict holds a side event to launch several knowledge sharing and advocacy-based dialogue initiatives for promoting digital accessibility as an essential strategy towards ensuring the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in post-pandemic building better efforts.

## Background

The results of G3ict’s DARE Index report of 2020 reveal the increasing commitment of CRPD Member States to digital accessibility on the institutional and regulatory levels. However, according to the same results, high percentage of these countries remain far from translating this commitment through effective implementation mechanisms and outcomes for persons with disabilities. Such prevailing gap in the deployment of effective digital inclusion programs and strategies has caused persons with disabilities to be left behind during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing reliance on virtual technology-based operations. Many persons with disabilities, particularly in developing countries, have found themselves excluded from long-distance learning opportunities, livelihood services, and other pandemic-related emergency response programs, such as recent vaccination efforts.

## Side Event Objectives

Alongside the launching of some of its efforts for promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in digital accessibility programs and strategies in the aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic, at this side event, G3ict will bring together several of its partners representing Organizations of Persons with Disabilities as well as international organizations working in the field of disability and development to:

* Highlight some of the outcomes of monitoring efforts of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities’ experiences considering the exclusive reliance on virtual technology-based operations that has been imposed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
* Introduce good practices that have been undertaken for enhancing persons with disabilities’ equal access and inclusion in some of the digital accessibility mechanisms and platforms utilized for overcoming COVID-19 pandemic-imposed challenges, particularly on the level of maintaining independent living capacity, education, and community engagement.
* Explore and discuss possible multilateral partnership strategies for promoting digital accessibility platforms towards ensuring the systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities in post COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts and mainstream community-based response services.

## Launch of G3ict Initiatives

During this side event, G3ict alongside its partners will launch the following initiatives:

* **DARE Academy Scholarship:** The purpose of this scholarship initiative is to support individuals representing Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in gaining knowledge and professional credentials in digital accessibility relevant to their advocacy work.
* **DARE Academy Webinar Series:** The objective of the DARE Academy is to foster an open peer-to-peer sharing of effective policies and practices enriched by a dialogue among stakeholders including representatives of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, policy makers and the private sector. In addition, this series of webinars will be dedicated to contributing to the documentation process of countries’ good practices for ensuring the availability of a reliable and comprehensive source of educational references and awareness raising tools in the arena of digital accessibility and inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
* **Global Network of Inclusive ICT Champions of Persons with Disabilities:** The purpose of this network is to enhance voices and representation of persons with disabilities through G3ict’s programs and initiatives for promoting the disposition of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on issues of digital accessibility and inclusive ICTs.

## Side Event Speakers

**Co-Chairs:** Axel Leblois, President, G3ict and Henrietta Davis-Wray, JP, President DPI-NAC

**Panelists:**

* Mohammed A. Loutfy, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, Capacity-Building and Advocacy, G3ict
* David Bainbridge, Executive Director, CBM Global
* Martine Abel-Williamson, Treasurer, World Blind Union (International Disability Alliance)
* Christopher M. Lee, Ph.D., Managing Director, IAAP; Chief Learning Officer, G3ict

Date and Time: TBD

## Accessibility Format

Sign language and closed captioning will be provided throughout the side event.

## About G3ict

G3ict is an advocacy initiative launched in December 2006, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at UN DESA. Its mission is to facilitate and support the implementation of the dispositions of the CRPD promoting digital accessibility and assistive technologies. Participating organizations include industry, academia, the public sector, and organizations representing Persons with Disabilities. G3ict promotes good practices in digital accessibility policies and programs and provides tools for advocates around the world including its Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index (DARE Index) designed to benchmark countries progress. Through its division IAAP, the International Association of Accessibility Professionals, G3ict offers professional development resources and certification to more than 2,500 members in 67 countries. Since 2011, G3ict organizes the M-Enabling Summit which promotes innovation in accessible technologies and environments.