



Organization: Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict)

Website: <https://g3ict.org>

Focal Point: Francesca Cesa Bianchi, Vice President, Institutional Relations, [fcesabianchi@g3ict.org](mailto:fcesabianchi@g3ict.org)

## Chapeau

*Working since its inception in 2006 at the intersection of Disability Rights and Technology innovation, G3ict proposes to include in the Pact for the Future dispositions to leverage existing and upcoming technology innovations for the digital inclusion of 1.2 billion persons with disabilities including youth and women with disabilities and the fast-expanding population of older persons with multiple disabilities. The magnitude of those demographics together with the objective of the Pact for the Future to bridge the digital divide and support Human Rights are the foundation of this submission.*

*The proposals below, organized in the five template sections, encompass practical preliminary suggestions covering the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities including youth, women, and older persons with disabilities to be considered for the Pact for the Future.*

*G3ict's further concrete step will be to convene a multi-stakeholder workgroup including organizations of persons with disabilities, global technology corporations, digital accessibility policy makers and other interested stakeholders from sectors such as financial services, health care, e-government, or education to build upon those proposals during the first half of 2024 with the following activities:*

- *File a report specifically geared towards AI innovations for inclusive technologies with the AI Advisory Body by 31 March 2024 ("Assistance to People").*
- *Continue participation and further input in the Digital Inclusion Round Table of the Global Digital Compact.*
- *Coordinate with regional representatives to participate in regional consultations of the Summit of the Future.*
- *Participate in the United Nations Civil Society Conference, 24 May 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya with side-event, exhibits and participation in its plenary proceedings as opportunities arise.*
- *Issue a final report with draft proposed language by 30 May 2024 to be submitted to the co-facilitators of the Summit of the Future with proposed agenda during the Summit of the Future in September 2024.*

*G3ict preliminary recommendations for the Pact for the Future are included under the suggested five Chapters' headings below:*

## Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

*Improving funding mechanisms to achieve SDGs for Persons with Disabilities:*

- *Ensure that all countries have financial mechanisms in place to provide funding for digital inclusion initiatives such as Universal Service Obligation Funds for equitable access to telecom and Internet services, including accommodations for persons with disabilities as per Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).*
- *Ensure that all countries have public procurement policies in place that include accessibility as a core criterion for the selection of providers of goods and services purchased with public funds so as to eliminate unintended discriminations due to the inaccessibility of services purchased with public funds.*
- *Provide guidelines for multilateral development agencies and regional banks to align their policies to the effect of ensuring that projects funded include considerations and plans for the inclusion of persons with disabilities including accessibility provisions.*
- *Focus international support for the dissemination of inclusive technologies on SDG Goal 4: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all persons with disabilities, SDG Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including those with disabilities. SDG Goal 8: Promoting inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for persons with disabilities and SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.*
- *Encourage national authorities overseeing subsidized programs for persons with disabilities to acquire assistive technologies to use agile, flexible processes to take full advantage of lower cost of latest generations of technologies and the potential to leverage off-the-shelf commodity digital products for the accommodation of persons with disabilities.*
- *Support the localization and dissemination of enabling technologies such as text-to- speech and speech recognition interfaces in local languages as well as mainstream localized assistive technologies through internationally funded programs in partnership with the technology sector.*
- *Provide guidelines for the funding of education resources for the development of digital skills programs for persons with disabilities as well as capacity building programs in accessibility know-how for developers of digital products and services.*

## Chapter II. International peace and security

*To incorporate in disaster relief and humanitarian support programs for areas affected by armed conflicts accessibility guidelines for persons with disabilities including for digital communications, accessible multimodal communications, availability of devices and connectivity, and the physical accessibility of relief operations.*

## Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

*The following proposals build upon the articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):*

- *To promote and mainstream the application of Reasonable Accommodation as per Article 2 and 4.1.(b) of the CRPD by ensuring that whenever a digitally accessible solution is available at an affordable cost, it must be implemented by both public and private sectors organizations*

- and facilitated by sectorial level playing field guidelines and regulations, and by organizing campaigns to address the lack of awareness of existing available solutions.*
- *To foster innovation in inclusive technologies as per Article 4.1.(g) of the CRPD through higher education and private sector research and development in promising applications of Artificial Intelligence such as AI tools to assist software and web site developers in producing accessible code, supporting advanced speech recognition for persons with speech impairment, AI applied to signal processing for Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCI) restoring muscular controls of translating intents or thoughts to text, using automatically generated AI images for persons with cognitive impairments relying on images as a substitute to text, notably children with autism, ensuring the safe use of Internet for older persons or persons with limited digital literacy.*
  - *To encourage through public-private cooperation and focused policy initiatives the dissemination of inclusive technology innovations brought to the marketplace by the technology sector, notably in the telecom, internet, education, and workplace environments as per the CRPD Model ICT Accessibility Policies issued by the ITU in cooperation with G3ict.*
  - *To promote harmonization of digital accessibility policies around the world so that economies of scale for accessible and inclusive solutions can be achieved by industry across borders and to this end whenever possible reference international accessible standards.*
  - *To expand international cooperation as per Article 32 of the CRPD to promote inclusive digital technologies through existing institutions such as the ITU, IGF, WSIS, ECOSOC, Regional Economic Commissions and Conference of States Parties by incorporating agenda items promoting innovations, good practices, and global progress metrics on the implementation of digital accessibility.*
  - *To encourage UN Member States to deploy national programs as per Article 4.1(i) of the CRPD for the training and certification of accessibility professionals without whom implementation of inclusive technologies, products and services is not possible.*

#### Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

*The Pact for the Future should address the gap that exists around the world in offering alternative formats for children and young persons with disabilities, including by addressing the large proportion living with undetected invisible disabilities such as hearing, cognitive, or learning disabilities. This means:*

- *To commit to training teachers and educators at large on assessing and accommodating young persons with disabilities in educational settings across all levels of education.*
- *To implement inclusive education strategies across all levels of education.*
- *To train young persons with disabilities to self-accommodate leveraging latest technologies.*
- *To promote the considerable array of technological solutions that are available today off-the-shelf but are often not made available or promoted among youth with disabilities.*
- *To train developers of educational material and content and services for the youth in digital accessibility and adopting frameworks for accessibility skills credentials.*
- *To require that educational material purchased with public funds be accessible.*

## Chapter V. Transforming global governance.

- *To ensure that UN affiliated organizations and UN Member States enact regulations as per CRPD Article 4.3 to implement statutory consultative processes with relevant stakeholders for the development and monitoring of inclusive digital technologies policies and programs: Organizations of persons with disabilities, policy makers, the technology industry and accessibility professionals from multiple sectors.*
- *To expand current digital and web accessibility policies and processes adopted by the United Nations Secretary-General to all UN affiliated organizations and maintain and publish an annual dashboard reflecting progress in implementing digital accessibility among those.*
- *To enhance the monitoring capabilities of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by allocating more resources to its work and defining frameworks factoring latest technologies for the implementation of digital accessibility policies and programs by CRPD States Parties.*
- *To consider the specific challenges of persons with disabilities while developing AI regulations with the objective to ensure their adequate protection as users of technology while anticipating the unintended consequences of measures that may restrict the development of new AI-based solutions notably by limiting how user data may be leveraged for embedded machine learning processes supporting assistive applications.*