

*Regional workshop on the Enhancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities*  
*29 September – 2 October 2008*  
*APCICT, Incheon, Republic of Korea*

-----

**REPORT**  
**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**  
**ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN VIET NAM**

*Presented by Mr. Hoang Quoc Lap,*  
*General Director,*  
*Vietnam ICT Development Project Management Unit*  
*Ministry of Information and Communication*  
*Member of NCCD Vietnam*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to be invited to participate in the Workshop and represent the Office of the National Coordinating Committee on Disabilities of Vietnam (NCCD) to present the ICT Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities in Vietnam.

The report contains 3 contents: i) Information on ICT situation in Vietnam; ii) ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Vietnam and iii) support from the Government and society to enhance the ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

**Part 1: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Vietnam**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development is one of the first priority areas in the social, economic development strategy in Vietnam. In the past few years, Vietnam has been investing in great amount for the development of ICT infrastructure and promotion of ICT application in 3 areas: the Government, enterprises and people, which have been and archiving remarkable results. According to the evaluation report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Vietnam has leading ICT growth in the world since 2004. In late 2006, the telephone density reaches 35/100 persons on average, 79 set/100 people by August 2008 and total subscriber network is 66 million people.

Internet has been officially used in Vietnam since November 1997. In the end of 2005, the subscriber density exceeds average subscription ratio of Asia (8.4%) and exceeds average subscription in the world (16,9%) in March 2007. Vietnam is ranked 17 in the top 20 leading countries in term of people using Internet. Currently, more than 21 million people in Vietnam are using Internet, which accounts for 23,5%. The big challenge being created for Vietnam and

countries in Asia and the Pacific is to universalize and maintain provision of communication services, internet to every people, especially to the least developed areas such as rural, island areas, including poor and disabled persons.

Target in Vietnam is, by 2010, to reach 70% of communes where public Internet access place is built and 30% using wide Internet bandwidth. Since 2004, Vietnam has accomplished to include provision of Internet to university, colleges and high schools and major hospitals in the country. By 2010, more than 90% of schools are able to access to Internet, and complete Internet for all hospitals

In collusion “**the Government of Vietnam is committed to turn Vietnamese society into information society. We give priority to develop ICT infrastructure, wide-spread mobile network, facilitating the internet access by every Vietnamese person, increase productivity and social, economic development**”, declared by H.E Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister at the International Meeting on Foreign relation 2008, in Hanoi, 8 January 2008.

## **Part 2: Evaluation on the ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities**

As mentioned above, due to the quick ICT development in Vietnam, like non-disabled person, persons with disabilities in Vietnam have been accessing to the benefits brought by the ICT.

**1. Information on Disability Community in Vietnam:** Currently, there are about 5,3 million persons with disabilities in Vietnam, accounting 6,34% national population.

### **Types of disabilities in Vietnam includes:**

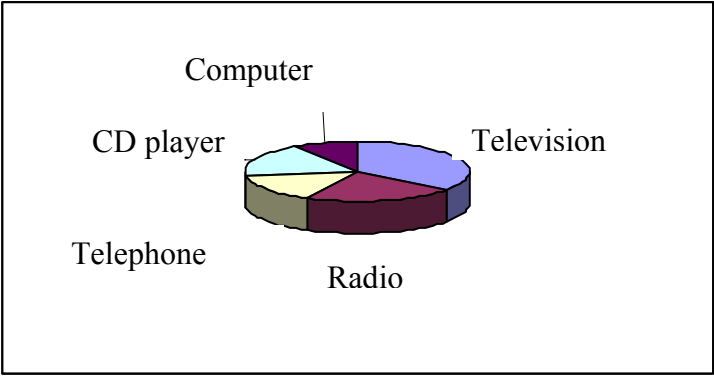
- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| + Mobility: 35,41%          | + Hearing and speaking disability: 20.41% |
| + Visual disability: 18,84% | + Intellectual disability: 25,34%         |

### **Causes of disabilities:**

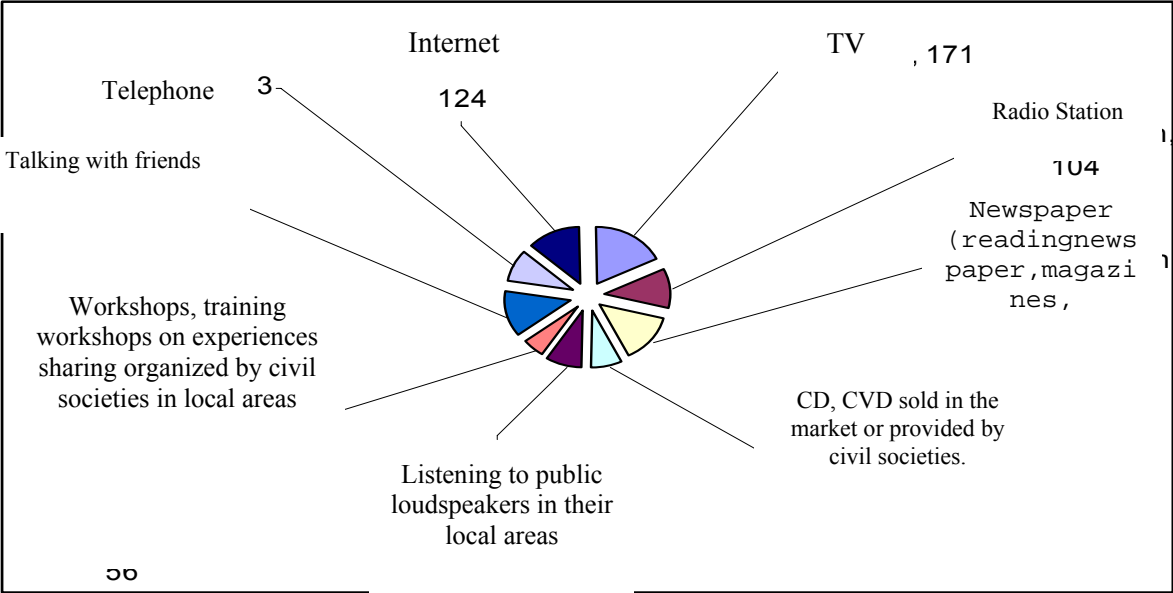
- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| + Congeniality: 35,8%   | + Diseases: 32,34%             |
| + War aftermath: 25,56% | + Occupational accident: 3,49% |

**2. For ICT Accessibility tools:** the popular tools for persons with disabilities access to information and communication are: radio, TV, personal computer, telephone, Internet, newspaper....

According to the data from the survey with 500 households with persons with disabilities in the northern Vietnam conducted by Vietnam Development Gateway (VnDG) <http://www.vietnamgateway.com.vn> in early 2008, more than 80% of persons with disabilities and families with persons with disabilities have TV; more than 50% have radio; more than 60% have telephone; nearly 20% have personal computers or laptop. Besides, nearly 50% persons with disabilities receive support from social organizations and friends/relatives to access to ICT.



Picture 1: Tools for ICT accessibility of persons with disabilities in Vietnam



Picture 2: ICT Accessibility formats of persons with disabilities.

3. **Understanding of persons with disabilities on ICT.** Also from VnDG, among family with Persons with disabilities having computers, 56% persons with disabilities are able to use computers (nearly 30% are very skilled, more than 30% are not so good at computer, more than 25% are poor at computer..), 27 % are not able to use computers; about 25% persons with disabilities are able to access to internet; 35% are able but less access to internet; about 12% don't access.

Evaluation of accessibility to ICT by persons with disabilities:

- Person with visual impairment: about 50% are able to use computer and 37% access to internet;
- Persons with hearing impairment: 42,8% are able to use computer and 70% access to internet;

- Persons with mobility impairment: 64% are able to use computer and over 50% access to internet;
- Persons with brain impairment: very low percentage, only 6,4% access to ICT.

**4. Use of ICT benefits by Persons with disabilities in Vietnam.** The number of ICT products for persons with disabilities in Vietnam is very few in comparison to the demand. And Persons with disabilities have little understanding of information on ICT products made for them so the application of ICT and use of ICT for them is still limited. Persons with disabilities in Vietnam are using computers and accessing to Internet for study and entertainment purposes. Survey conducted by VnDG shows that 16% Persons with disabilities using computers and accessing to internet for communication; 17% for information seeking, 28% for studying, 12% for working, 23% for leisure and entertainment... Persons with disabilities access to computer and Internet at home or Internet cafe (70%) and workplaces or schools (30%)...

**4. General evaluation on the ICT accessibility by PWD in Vietnam**  
**Through the mentioned above illustrative data, it shows:**

- Inspire of limitations and concentration in major cities, persons with disabilities in Vietnam are given favorable conditions and try their best to overcome difficulties, barriers to access to the benefits brought by ICT. ICT have been promoted to serve daily life and working demand of persons with disabilities.
- In the community, persons with disabilities have not enough knowledge and skills to use and exploit benefits from ICT. Also, persons with disabilities are poor so they cannot afford to access or purchase ICT products.
- Suitable ICT products for PWD in Vietnam is still quite a few. There is lack of available technique and technology for ICT products for Persons with disabilities. Lack of concrete policies in promotion of ICT application to improve life and employment of persons with disabilities.

**Part 3: Government and social support**

1. Article 5 of ICT Law states: preferential policies should be given to develop ICT for ethnic minority people, persons with disabilities, persons living in difficult circumstances.
2. The National Action Plan (NAP) to support persons with disabilities in 2006 – 2010 already shows the target: ratio of Persons with disabilities accessing to Internet and related services should be equal to ¼ of national ratio.
3. Ministry of Information and Communication implements the NAP: supporting persons with disabilities access to ICT including researches, incentive policies in ICT development, internet, ICT standards, training modules, employment model, manuals on ICT products to serve persons with disabilities and several ICT – related occupations w for persons with disabilities...
4. To respond to the Biwako Million Framework for Action (BMF) towards an Inclusive, Barrier – free and Right-based Society for Persons with Disabilities” in the ICT area, with support from the National Steering Committee on ICT, Ministry of Information and Communication, and Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, **the “ICT – Light**

**the hope” Award** is launched by the Vietnam Association of Information Processing and the National Coordinating Committee on Disability of Vietnam (NCCD), the ICT Application Department since December 2005. The program received active participation of disabled persons’ organizations, ICT companies, and individuals to submit ICT products for the use of persons with disabilities. The first awarding ceremony held on the National Disability Day, 18 April 2007, was attended by Standing Deputy Prime Minister. This event was officially declared to be organized every two years.

*Purpose and significances of the Award.* The “**ICT – Light the hope” Awards** is an important event commending agencies of/for persons with disabilities, individuals with disabilities in their community whose have products made in order to encourage, to uphold their strength to integrate into community. In addition, the competition also aims at commending the agencies and individuals in the society whose ICT products and solutions are made in support of persons with disabilities for social inclusion, and also reaffirms ICT sector an important area towards an inclusive, barrier-free and right-based society for persons with disabilities.

5. The Humanity SMS program donating 10,000 computers for persons with disabilities has been launched in throughout the country to call for attention from whole society. Besides sending message through SMS, contribution are mobilized from INGOs, enterprises and kind-hearted person in the country. The computer provider is committed to produce low – cost computers for the Program and also provide maintenance services for computer users.
6. A lot of clubs, schools and training centers for persons with disabilities in Vietnam have been established and managed by persons with disabilities.

- 
- *The law on electronic transaction developed and passed by the National Assembly in 2005 and The Law on Information Technology, developed by MIC and passed by the National Assembly in 2006 ).*
  - *(National steering committee on ICT , Ministry of information and communication)*