

Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, 9-11 October 2013

Chair's Statement

1. The “Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific” (GITC) was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea, the LG Corporation and the Korean Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities from 9 to 11 October 2013, in Bangkok, Thailand.
2. The GITC event aims to promote ICT partnerships among youth with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region toward the implementation of the Incheon Strategy, adopted in 2012. As part of the first event, the “IT Policy Seminar” was organized on 10 October 2013, with participation of Governmental officials, IT experts and representatives of civil society organizations from Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.
3. The participants shared national experiences in building accessible ICT infrastructure and systems, and reducing the digital divide for persons with disabilities, with particular attention to youth, in their respective countries.
4. The participants reaffirmed their continued commitment to Goal 3 of the Incheon Strategy on “enhancing access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication” along with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to promote access of persons with disabilities to new ICTs for their empowerment and full participation in all aspects of life.

5. The participants also stressed the importance of inclusion of disability in internationally agreed development goals, particularly in the emerging post-2015 United Nations development agenda. In this regard, they welcomed the holding of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (held in New York on 23 September 2013), that identified access to ICTs as a priority commitment in the realization of the development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond.
6. With a view to building all-inclusive and barrier free societies for the 650 million persons with disabilities, especially youth with disabilities, in Asia and the Pacific, the participants agreed as follows:
 - 6.1 ICT accessibility should be accorded top priority requiring immediate political and executive actions by all the Governments in the region.
 - 6.2 Strong partnerships should be built among all IT stakeholders as a guarantee to the realization of accessible ICT societies for persons with disabilities.
 - 6.3 Policymakers and IT experts need to have greater interaction and collaborate to strengthen policies and programmes to bridge the digital divide.
 - 6.4 The ESCAP secretariat should assess progress in the efforts of member States to enhance ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities bearing in mind the commitments made in the Incheon Strategy and other relevant outcome documents.
7. The participants expressed deep appreciation to the organizers of the Event and agreed that the next event could tentatively be held in Viet Nam.