Internet Society Accessibility Standing Group

Members Meeting – April 3 2023

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. So I am Gunela Astbrink, the chair of the ISOC Accessibility Standing Group, and I welcome you to the second Members Meeting of the Standing Group. It's a real pleasure, on behalf of the leadership team, to outline what we have done towards our vision of digital inclusion for persons with disability. And we look forward to hearing your feedback and suggestions as we go through the meeting today and tonight. There's   there should be plenty of opportunity to have discussion as well.

Just wanted to let you know we have apologies from Klaus Hoeckner and sSwaran Ravindra.

This time is set especially so members from Europe and Africa can benefit, as distinct from the previous annual General Meeting. Unfortunately, it's not so good for members in parts of Asia and the Pacific, but that's what happens with time zones. So we'll aim to rotate meetings in future for people's convenience.

This call is for 90 minutes if we need it, and we have captioning, live captioning, human captioning; and international sign interpretation. So thank you for that.

Yes, early in Canada, fairly early morning, so we are all in different time zones.

So we have an addition to the program that I sent out on Friday, and this is quite exciting, actually. This is something that we have been working on. This is the ISOC Board of Trustees. We are very happy to have Muhammed Shabbir join us. He is in Bangkok airport, having just left the Board of Trustees meeting there, and all going well with the flight schedules, he will be with us for 20 minutes or so.

So just for those who may not be aware, Dr. Mohammed Shabbir is from Pakistan with a doctorate in International Relations and has the lived experience of disability. He has been on the ISOC Board of Trustees for two years and currently is standing for reelection, and those elections are happening right away.

So I am going to pass over to Muhammed Shabbir to explain what the exciting news is. Over to you.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: Hello, Gunela and everyone. Thank you very much for opportunity, and I really apologize for the background noise and the short time that I will be joining to this call. This is really an important call. I should have joined this more, but of course, the flights doesn't wait for anyone.

I will quickly explain the resolution, and then we'll receive some of the comments and questions, if there are any, from the members.

Basically, so the Internet Society Board of Trustees give the high level policy direction to the organization, Internet Society, and then it evaluates and monitors the implementation of that policy. So what this resolution does is provides the high level policy direction to the Internet Society staff and, of course, the community that these are the lines on which the accessibility work at the organization should go on.

This resolution has two parts. Before I explain those two parts, I would just like to acknowledge the support of the whole Board of Trustees, particularly the members, Luis Martinez, Sagarika Wickramasekera, Jon Peterson, Barry Leiba, and Robert Pepper. Of course, thanks are also due to the leadership of Accessibility Standing Group, being the Gunela Astbrink, Joly MacFie, Judith Hellerstein.

 And of course, David Berman. I don't know if he is here.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, he is.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: Thank you. It is in front of you. The first part, the whereas section, explains the board's understanding. The acknowledgment of the number of persons with disabilities there are around the world.

The second is about the Board's applaud to Internet society the work that has already been done. It's the recognize of ISOC Accessibility and Disability Chapter, ISOC Accessibility and Disability special interest group, and of course now the Standing Group, the group that has been working so far on this very important topic.

The third paragraph is basically the recognition of the fact that disability transcends, and it transcends the geography, economy, and the gender status as well. So it can happen to anyone, anywhere in the world.

And fourth para, basically, in this resolution and in this part is the Board's understanding of digital accessibility, how it should look like.

The next part is basically the high level policy direction from the Board to the organization, and there in the first para, the board is giving the CEO and the organization its full support to advance the culture of accessibility at the organization.

In the second para, the direction is to make the ISOC websites, applications, and content accessible to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines according to AA standards. For the new content, it will be AA standards, and for the old and legacy content, the staff would have a mechanism formal under which it would be decided which legacy content would be made accessible.

In the third para, there is the   so accessibility goes beyond accessibility of the website and content and applications. It is also, as I said in the first para, there needs to be a culture of accessibility. So in the third para, the direction is to formulate a comprehensive framework on accessibility for persons with disabilities for the organization.

And the last para is about   it's basically direction to the CEO to give quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees so that both can monitor and evaluate the implementation of this direction.

This is basically high level policy to the organization for ISOC. It is   it doesn't go beyond the remit of the organization. Some people wanted it to go beyond that, but it was decided by the Board that first the Internet Society has need to be accessible and then goes beyond its remit. And in the implementation of this, we expect that the staff and community, particularly the Accessibility Standing Group, would work hand in hand to formulate and then to implement this policy.

I stop here, and over to you back, Gunela. Thank you.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Dr. Muhammed Shabbir. It is so exciting to have this pass on to the Standing Group, and now the work goes to the practical implementation of this. So certainly, as the Standing Group, looking forward to working with ISOC staff to do that.

I just wanted to check if anyone, any members have any questions or comments about this.

JOLY MACFIE: This is Joly. Let me switch my camera on here. Oh, yes, here I am.

I just sort of   the bit about   the paragraph which says that beyond just doing the website and so on, the CEO shall make a fund. So when we are thinking of things like, you know, funds for captioning events and that kind of thing, that was what was punted, am I right, that there was no   you know, so let's say I wanted to caption an event, I've got to go to Andrew Sullivan and get him to approve it or he'll just say no, we don't have a budget for that as yet? How is that going to work? Any idea?

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: So the budget for the captioning, so my understanding from this is that there should be, at least for the public calls that Internet Society organizes, they should be made accessible to the extent possible, and captioning is one major part of making your calls and your events accessible, so there must be a budget for these kind of events. But as I said, this is a high level policy under which there would be an operational policy that would be formulated under the supervision of CEO, which would include budgets for these kind of events and, of course, for the captioning. How much those budgets would be, this remains to be decided. And of course, the staff and the community would work together on this to decide and to formulate a policy where we are able to make these kind of calls accessible for all.

JOLY MACFIE: And another thing we discussed was a dedicated staff officer dedicated to this topic. I don't quite see that in there.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: Well, we discussed this, but staffing, hiring and all this, this is the remit of the CEO and president. So he has now the direction from the Board, and if he deems it a necessity, he would definitely hire an expert   hire someone as a staff who is accessibility expert, or he may also choose to work through an accessibility expert firm to make the Internet Society accessible. Because there are a number of things that need to be done to make the Internet Society accessible.

JOLY MACFIE: Okay. I tell you why I ask about this is because we have coming up in DC the North American School of Internet Governance, which is run by the Puerto Rico chapter, and they have applied for money to do a live stream, but there wasn't enough money to cover the entire cost of captioning, let alone perhaps sign language. The theme of the event is inclusion, so we thought, well, you know, we'll have the   it's in DC, so we'll have the DC chapter apply for the Foundation money to cover that. And they turned around and said no, no double dipping. It's against the rules. We can't   if one chapter gets the money, no other chapter can get the money. I said well, maybe we could just get the money to do, in the name of inclusion. So I am wondering if this resolution means I can go back to them and say look, now   I write to Andrew and say okay, now you've got the permission. Before when we'd ask for this stuff, they say well, we can't do this until the board decides money should be applied to this. Otherwise, there's no budget. So is there any change in the situation?

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: So I understand what you are saying, Joly. Look. Board doesn't decide which money goes to where, particularly with regards to the grants that are given to the chapters. There are set criteria for each grant. Be that small grants or the large grants or any other grants, skills program. So these grants are provided through Internet Society Foundation.

JOLY MACFIE: Yeah, let me interrupt. So what I am saying is if this is something that isn't covered by grants, will the foundation or the Internet Society now have budget to cover this kind of thing? And is that kind of

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR: They should. They should. So first, they would agree upon there would be a mechanism. As you see under para second and third resolved, you see that there is mention of a mechanism. There would be a mechanism under which these kind of questions that you raise would be decided. And this needs to be a comprehensive framework. What shape that would be, because board doesn't involve itself in operational policy, and these are operational matters. So this should come from the staff. Of course, board can say that this may impact in some other way, but as I said in the beginning, the high level policies are direction. So now under this direction, the operational framework needs to be developed, and we'll see what shapes it takes.

Of course, I understand that there is already a working group with   on which Gunela participates, and it's already run by some staff who is developing on that framework. So I think in that group, this should be discussed and

JOLY MACFIE: You just froze for a moment there.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. I think we probably need to cut it short anyway because Muhammad Shabbir is going to catch a flight very soon, and we need to move on. So envelope, he got cut short in the middle of his response.

So I am going to move on. Okay. There is a question here from David Berman. A quick question please, thank you.

DAVID BERMAN: May I propose that you just ask the question, be bold, and find out?

JOLY MACFIE: I certainly intend to.

DAVID BERMAN: That's my question. Thank you. Over.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Nice and short. I'll move on. And I think it's such a great start to our meeting to hear what the board has resolved.

I am going to skip to the overview of 2022 because, again, we have a couple of time constraints here. We are going to have a section at the member meetings introducing a new member. Could be a particular member in regard to certain aspects of accessibility. Today I am going to introduce Jaunita George, and she has a background as a lawyer and

technical expert in accessibility at a major U.S. credit union. And I just spoke for the first time to Jaunita last Friday, and she is very interested in offering to help in a number of ways. So I'm going to pass it over to Jaunita for maybe about three minutes, if you wanted to talk a little bit about yourself and your expertise. Thank you.

JAUNITA GEORGE: Hi. So I am really excited to be joining this Working Group. As Gunela said, I am an attorney. I also am a CPWA by the IAP and IAP professional member, member of the W3C Accessibility Guidelines and ARIA working groups. And just also I work at Navy Federal Credit Union as their, I guess   I manage their accessibility program. So you know, really excited to see how we can make a difference and really excited to meet everybody here. You know, I am a new ISOC member, so you know, this is all really great.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much, Juanita. And I know that you have to leave on the half an hour. Further on we will be talking about the possibility of setting up a subcommittee, which could have to do with technical accessibility development and various ideas around that, in particular now that ISOC has this board resolution. And so it's very, very timely that we can provide that advice to ISOC in the best possible way.

Okay. So are there any other questions, comments to Juanita? No? Okay. Great.

So we are going to step back, then, to a very brief overview of what we did last year. And I put in the Chat a link to a Google Doc, which should have that information about the report from last year.

So we only started the Accessibility Standing Group in March last year, and when it came to get going working out our vision and mission and the goals, both long term goals and the goals for last year and this year. So we wanted to cement all that. And now, of course, we are reaching out to our membership. And wanting to involve everyone as much as possible. So we've got this document, and with the goals in 2022 23, it's very much building an understanding of accessibility through partnerships with ISOC chapters and other key

organizations; training and mentoring; promotion and communications; implementation of a pilot program aimed at training emerging leaders with disability; and improving digital inclusion for persons with disabilities in the Internet Society. And as we've heard, this is going to really take off this year.

And we had run a number of activities. One of them was starting that disability leadership training. That's on the list there. And we did, in cooperation with the Asia Pacific School of Internet Governance, a pilot workshop for representatives of disabilities from five South Asian countries coming together in Bangladesh in June last year. And we had a three day workshop, basically, and one of the outcomes of that   and thank you, Joly, for finding it so quickly   was th Dhaka Declaration on Disability Leadership on Disability Rights and Governance. And that was resulting from quite intense discussions, and this is the result. It is important for individuals to continue the work in their own countries. What we are looking for in the future is more workshops in other regions. This was a very successful workshop in partnership with the Bangladesh ISOC chapter.

When we do run these workshops, they will have a prerequisite of an online training course. And initially we use the standard ISOC training course Internet Governance. That was felt that it really didn't meet the needs that we have. So we have contracted to write a syllabus for Internet Governance and accessibility. And that was completed about a month ago. And now it's a matter of working through the next stage. And that is finding ways and support to have an accessibility training platform to run this and to actually design and deliver this course. The driver will be done through ISOC Learn. So lots to do.

And just wanted to also mention that we've had a number of webinars. You can see here the list   I am not going to read them all out   of all the activities, webinars, meetings, et cetera. There's been webinars on the European Web Accessibility Initiative and the Accessibility Act in Europe. There's   in French, there was a webinar on accessibility for developers. And also there was a Bangladesh accessibility webinar, which

PARTICIPANT: Oh, I think the sound might be out.

PARTICIPANT: No, sound is fine. At least it was fine for me, Gunela.

PARTICIPANT:: Yeah, I can hear you very well.

JOLY MACFIE: Yep, sound is good.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: All right. I'll keep going. I hope the person who couldn't hear can work through that.

All right. So the last thing I wanted to mention was there is an ISOC internal working group on accessibility, and a number of us from the leadership team have had a number of meetings to work through accessible content. And also we initiated a draft accessibility framework for ISOC. And that could come in very handy now that that high level policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees. And I just note in the chat that Dr. Muhammad Shabbir has to leave us to catch a flight. So again, I say thank you to him for sharing this excellent news with us. And Juanita George has to, too. So we look forward to further communication there.

All right. Are there any questions on those particular activities, what we did last year, anything that needed clarification?

JOLY MACFIE: Would you like to talk a bit more about the framework now that I've got it up on the screen here?

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Absolutely, Joly.

So this   and this is very much a working document. There's more that probably has been added, could be added. But it talks about objectives, high level objectives of building a

culture of accessibility. So theres that understanding that this is a key   well, they use the word "DNA." It's really ensuring that accessibility just becomes a natural part of what ISOC does. And so I mentioned the internal Accessibility Working Group. These are just bullet points; right? So it's staff disability and digital inclusion awareness toolkit, and then training to be given. Identifying accessibility champions amongst ISOC staff who can really remind everyone about accessibility when it comes to policy, programs, content, outreach, whatever. And importantly, having keynote speakers at ISOC meetings that include representatives from the disability community. Because all the time we have to remember, it's nothing about us without us. And to have Dr. Muhammad Shabbir on the board, as a person with disability, to get this resolution approved is exactly how we want to work.

So we've got talking about disability showcase events, staff survey of accessibility awareness, and Joly's already mentioned encouraging employment of staff with disability. And that doesn't necessarily just mean having an accessibility expert on staff, which we would really hope will happen, but just in the natural course of employing people, that a person with a disability or two or three could easily join the staff as well and just do their job but happen to have a disability.

And I am not going to go through all of them because there's quite a few, but it gives you an idea about what the framework is all about and the work ahead to continue that good working relationship we have with the internal group on accessibility, the staff group, that is.

Okay. And as you can see, Joly's scrolling down. You can see that we've been rather busy. So here's the leadership   just go down to bottom again, Joly, please. You've got the leadership team there. So Vashkar Bhattacharjee is the vice chair. And Kindy Montreuil is the current secretary but is a French speaker, and so we are keen to help to find an English speaker who is good at taking minutes of meetings because Joly does an enormous amount, and it would be great to have someone support that role.

Zakari Yama

JOLY MACFIE: I would note here, Gunela, that I am now the former AMS admin.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Former, yes, because this is an older document, so I recognize that.

So Zakari Yama and Swaran Ravindra are sharing the role of planning and reporting officer. Klaus Hoeckner is chapter Advisory Council representative in the proxy role. Judith Hellerstein is the treasurer, and as Joly mentioned, he is the former AMS admin. Not officially on the leadership team but does an amazing job setting up meetings and organizing captioning and interpretation and much more.

Okay. So before we go on to hearing from some of our members of the leadership team, are there any questions or comments about the report from last year?

JOLY MACFIE: Vashkar, if you are talking, you are muted.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. I am not sure if Vashkar   I have introduced the team, and I'd like each of the persons present to share in about three or four minutes a little bit about some of the activities that they've been involved with. So Vashkar is first, talking about the Bangladesh webinar and something about the ISOC Community Week last year. So over to you, Vashkar.

VASHKAR BHATTACHARJEE: Thank you very much, Gunela. I think I am visible. People can see me and listen to me. Apology if there is some extra noise there.

Colleagues, okay, you could get some extra noise from my computer because I am an assistive technology user. I am using the screen reading software.

Thank you very much, Gunela, for your dynamic leadership, and we are really progressing well with your leadership and with all the colleagues from SG supporting us. And Joly, absolutely you are doing remarkable work.

Colleagues, we are just promoting digital accessibility, not only within the Internet Society. In our region, we are very active, especially for IG related events, in FPRIG, we are very visible and just presented a number of workshops, and also we raised voice in different sessions.

We have organized a national level webinar along with Accessibility Standing Group and Bangladesh chapter of Internet Society. For Bangladesh we have organized one, and that was very high stakes webinar. Our senior secretary of technology and communication was present as guest, and also the Director General of the Ministry of Social Service under the Ministry of Social Welfare was there, and a number of high level officials, including the policy advisor of the Digital Bangladesh Standing Group, which is run by the honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh. It was a very high stakes webinar we organized. Physically, there was 25 people have attended, and virtually, about 50 people were there.

And one of the early outcomes is that we are going to add the international Web accessibility guideline for ensuring digital accessibility in Bangladesh. We are expecting by next June we will get this in our country. The draft is there, and we have draft followed by the international standard WCAG 2.1. It was a very nice and successful webinar.

Also, Gunela mentioned we ordered Dhaka workshop that was by and for persons with disabilities with the facilitation of Gunela and with the support of Article 19, foundations, School of Internet Governance, Asia Pacific School of Internet Governance, and Bangladesh Internet Society. We have organized that workshop. It was a very effective and fruitful workshop, I can say, and I think that will be one of the first kind of workshop organized pi people with disabilities and their   by people with disabilities and the Accessibility Standing Group.

Also we are providing some support to the Internet Society web developer and also the community. As Gunela mentioned, the last time we faced difficulties for accessing the Community Week event because of inaccessibility of the platform. This year, trying to support them voluntarily, even though not professional support, to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for all. But it will be more intensive and more interactive, and all the hurdles which we faced last year because of the inaccessibility of the platform, we'll overcome this.

That Community Week event was very, very interesting. We presented accessible and inaccessible websites, which we have demonstrated, and Dr. Shabbir was there and facilitated by Gunela, I was one of the presenters and demonstrated the accessible and inaccessible websites through screen reading software. Thank you so much, Gunela, and I hope we'll get the guidance and encouragement by the members, then we can do more work. And we had expectation, this year we will work more with the global IGF. We want to see more participation of people with disabilities in the global IGF, and also regional IGF, and also country level IGF. Our experience shows that country level IGFs are sometimes not that much inclusive and then not much talking about digital accessibility and inclusion. So we need to do more of making plenty of IGFs inclusive. Thank you very much. Hopefully we will be able to discuss more on this.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Vashkar. I think there's a number of points there. I want to highlight the webinar in Bangladesh with high level representatives from the government. And this was a really good opportunity to see how having   well, having the expertise already through Vashkar and other disability advocates, but adding that layer of the international perspective and the advocacy from the international perspective of the Internet society and the Accessibility Standing Group meant that there was, I suppose, that added impetus for the government to implement those particular policies. And this is something that maybe other members may find useful to consider in their own countries. So it's something to think about.

All right. I'll move on now to Zakari Yama to talk a little about the webinar on accessibility for Web developers.

ZAKARI YAMA: Excellent leadership, thank you very much. So I am coming to the webinar, we had a webinar on accessibility guidelines for developers in collaboration with ISOC Niger chapter. Basically, you want to meet accessibility standards. As you know, it is one of the key components. So to develop display in the process, in that this is where we targeted first the developers for this first webinar. In the webinar, we have highlighted the importance and the benefit of providing solutions that comply with accessibility standards for both developers and their clients, which are generally businesses or public services.

Benefits such as the possibility for the developers to sell their solutions in the growing number of countries with legislative requirements in public services. And also the fact that compliance with the accessibility standards is a good selling point for the developers, we also highlighted the fact that the business clients providing accessible services have a competitive advantage. So we really presented them the importance of providing accessible solutions for their clients and also the benefits for them, as providers.

We also took the opportunity to explain the role of Accessibility Standing Group as a digital inclusion advocate and its role in developing and sharing their expertise in digital inclusion. So for this first webinar, we organized in conjunction with ISOC Niger chapter. This is the subject we highlighted.

Thank you very much for listening.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Zakari. And again, it's an example of collaboration with a chapter, in this case the Niger chapter, and advocating to Web developers about not only is it good to do accessible websites, but it actually can have profitable and useful outcomes. So yes. And we'll again hear more about this working with chapters further on in the agenda. So again, thank you very much, Zakari. And we'll move on to Judith, Judith Hellerstein, who will probably talk about the importance of captioning and sign interpretation. Over to you, Judith.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Thanks so much. It's good to be here. So as Joly mentioned, we try to get human captioning available at all events. We are looking   most of the time, the problem is that while AI captioning is good, it doesn't work well with accents, and it doesn't work well with different people's voices and other areas, and so we are looking at trying to get   propose human captioning and try to get funding for it. Captioning is not only for persons with disabilities. It's also for persons who speak a different language than English and for people who have poor connection qualities, bandwidth issues. And we try to get a separate stream for the captioning so that people can follow along on the text based device because we find that some persons with disability prefer that to having it on a crowded screen. Because that also   when the screens are too crowded, it's harder for people with cognitive disabilities to really get focused into the conversation. So we are aiming to get captioning, and we always look at different innovative ways of getting captioning at other people's meetings. So like for instance, at the IGF USA, we sold the captioning to a company as a way of promoting their logo and getting it posted on our livestream so their logo could be on the livestream of the talk. So we try to think of innovative and other ways to get funding for human captioning.

Sign language, we work with what we call International Sign, which is not a language, but because every single place, country, has its own sign language, we   unless we are tuning it to a specific audience, if we have sign language participants, we don't want to discriminate, so we try to go with International Sign Language. So that's one of the aspects of that.

We are also working to try to figure out, instead of just having it on all the calls, figure out, putting a question on the registration form so that we have captioning only when it's on request. But that is the goal of having at least human captioning on every call that ISOC does, as well as other groups do. So we try to work on including other groups on their Internet Governance issues to have captioning as well.

I think that is all I have to say right now, but thanks, and happy to answer any questions.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thanks so much, Judith. And again, it's   there's a fair bit of complexity, and sometimes misunderstanding, about captioning and sign interpretation. So I think Judith explained a lot that is useful there.

Are there any questions for Judith?

Okay. Joly, did you want to talk at all about the way you organize accessible calls and follow up transcriptions and so forth?

JOLY MACFIE: Yes. Well, first I just wanted to mention the Accessibility SIG as separate from the Standing Group and just, you know, mention that there are two different groups; that the SIG started as a New York chapter project, became the Global SIG. And then when they introduced the standing groups, went back to being the New York Chapter project. And the Standing Group has a very precise kind of role within the Internet Society. It's facilitated by staff, and it has a purpose, you know, which is projects that are approved, you know, crowdsourced amongst the members and approved by the Internet society. The SIG is the chapter project, and so it can do whatever it wants, and you know, within keeping with the mission, and so one of the things that I've been doing for quite some time for them is livestreaming the meetings of the New York accessibility meetup. And there, you know, we have people signing, we have captions, and basically, we've kind of figured out some practices. And one of them is to put the captions on a separate monitor within the events. And to have human captionists, as Judith has said. And I don't know, I have kind of figured out this peculiar way of running events so that I can, you know, run audio out to Zoom to a captioner and run that back into StreamText to a screen in the room while at the same time taking the same thing and overlaying it on the thing and sending it out to a live stream, and I am happy if anyone wants to do this on their own events to give them some kind of tutorial.

But I did just want to, you know, to just show how many events that we do. This. I am going on to share screen. And here we go.

We do the Accessibility VR meetup, and here you can see the live streams, and then what we do is we do a live stream, and then it's edited down to a presentation. And then redo the transcript to make it easier and tighter to understand. But there you go. There are, you know, of all these things on virtual reality, and similarly on the New York Accessibility

Meetup. There's all the live streams going on every month. There's the edited presentations and going back to, like, there's lots of them.

VR is a very interesting field or accessible meetings, and in fact, we just have started, discovered a new VR environment that's quite exciting called Nowhere, which your avatar is actually your webcam, which is in a little frame, and you can zoom around and just talk to other people on the webcam. It's actually in some ways even better than Zoom because you can have a bunch of people in a room and you can go and talk and hang out with people. So that's quite good.

The other thing that I will just show briefly is   I've got to switch my share here.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Also to add to Joly's comments, the Accessibility SIG is also the Secretariat for

JOLY MACFIE: For DCAD.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: For DCAD, and also hosts a lot of other   host originally the Standing Group's website and other toolkits and other areas. So we do a lot of double duty there.

JOLY MACFIE: There we go. Shared. This is the thing I spend all my days in now, the script. And here you see me today working on the   like this, the ISOC Alumni Interplanetary thing. So here is a thing where I am editing the transcript of this, and it's got a thing where if I click here, I can go "remove filler words," and it will take out all the ums and ahs in a transcript, just like that. If you want to, it will take them out in the audio too. So this is a wonderful tool which you have seen me use in publishing some of the Accessibility SIG, the Standing Group events. And it's a tool that I recommend learning for anybody to script. And I think that's all I am going to say for today.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you, Joly. And it just comes back to all the amazing things that you experiment with and work with and make happen. And it looks so streamlined, but there's so much behind it. And we are very fortunate to have Joly to do all of this for us. So again, thank you, Joly.

And I just wanted to clarify also that with a new system of standing groups, there's three standing groups under ISOC: Our Accessibility Standing Group, there's one on gender, and there's one on youth, I believe.

JOLY MACFIE: Youth, yeah.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, yes. And then there are a number of special interest groups. And I should say the standing groups, the three standing groups are really more permanent, whereas the SIGs   and not to be confused with the project under the New York Chapter. These are SIGs that operate with the standing groups, but the SIGs are   I think as Joly mentioned, the topics are elected   are voted on by members every couple of years. So there is a number now, Internet of Things, for example, that's one that comes to mind, and the Education, and they won't necessarily continue, but the Accessibility Standing Group, all going well, will continue. So that's very encouraging.

Okay. So we have I half an hour left, and we are going to talk a little bit about going forwards now, planning for 2023 and   Ah, yes, there are the other special interest groups. Internet for Education, online safety, Internet of Things, Affordable Internet Access, cyber security, there are the five.

So we are building now on the foundational work we did last year. And particular activities we want to work with this year is developing those partnerships, and particularly with chapters. And we've already heard about webinars and workshops together with chapters, and there's a lot more we can do with that. So we are actually to have a meeting in   on the 19th of April with chapters, and if there's any members here who really want to engage with particular chapters, you are welcome to join. But it's focusing on talking with chapters

about what they do currently, if anything, about accessibility, what they might like to do, where there are maybe gaps in their understanding. So we will have that conversation. We will also have a survey that Zakari will be leading on those particular questions too. So we get a clear picture, and then we can start working with them as much as possible. And so that's one aspect.

We talked before about the accessibility framework that's going to come from that high level policy resolution from the Board of Trustees. And so this year, we are going to work towards implementation. We talked about development of the online course and the delivery of that. And also we are keen to develop partnerships with global and regional disability organizations to engage more persons with disability in our work. So that's some of the things we are looking at. And are there any comments, any questions about that as a very general overview? Because we will drill down a little bit about success committees and ISOC chapters in a minute.

Okay. So then on the agenda, we've got setting up possible subcommittees. We did have a small subcommittee when we were developing the content for the syllabus of the online course. And that was really useful to help the consultant, Nirmita Simhan, to do that work, and we also ran a dialogue with the Internet community to ensure we covered all different aspects and ideas from that. So there's a couple of possible suggestions here. One of them is setting up a subcommittee on technical accessibility development advising ISOC staff because they were all going well via a lot of activity in that area. And if anyone is interested in working on something like that, you might wish to put your hand up or make a comment. So just checking with people on the call. Is there anyone who would be interested in doing something like that if we set up a subcommittee?

Okay. There's a few people who have dropped off the call with   because of other commitments. So we might just hold that and see where we go with it. And we will talk about it in the Leadership Team Meeting in a couple of weeks.

We also were looking at planning the online delivery of the disability leadership course, and again, making sure that what type of accessible learning platforms are there? How can we do this in the best possible way? What about designing the course in an accessible

manner? So again, if there is anyone from the education sector, anyone who is interested generally in this, we'd be very interested in hearing.

We'll continue on, again, discussing this in our leadership team meetings. Bearing in mind that anything we do needs to align with the goals we have and the activities charted. Okay. Right. Okay. So I've got a couple of comments in the chat. One from Emmanuel Nkeng from the education sector. Right, I am getting three here. In different ways. One is a small school, so it's really a matter of what would work in that online course delivery. So Abraham, Assumita, and Emmanuel, would any of you or all of you, please, would you like to make a few comments about your experience and how you could contribute? That would be really helpful. Would you like to speak?

JOLY MACFIE: I think you are going have to call them out by name.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. Emmanuel, would you like to speak?

EMMANUEL PENN NKENG: Greetings, everyone. I am Emmanuel Penn, I am with our national education board, also a climate activist, and I am very much interested in the different ways we can use Internet to boost the educational sector. Thank you very much.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you. Okay. We didn't quite get every word you said there, unfortunately, but did you say that you have worked with accessibility as well?

EMMANUEL PENN NKENG: Right now, the team in our home country are trying to make the Internet as accessible as possible to different schools in the country, especially as the villages in other parts of the country have very few or limited accessibility to Internet. That's why when you brought up this subject, I am so very much interested because this, I can easily link it up to our superiors and those who have the budget and see how we can add the learning and understanding of Internet

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay.

JOLY MACFIE: If I can poke in here and say I think it's a good time to, like, make the distinction between access and accessibility.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you.

JOLY MACFIE: Because it sounds like what Emmanuel is talking about is access to the Internet; whereas, what we are talking about is accessibility, which is being available to even if you have the access, it being available to people that have disabilities of one nature or another. So, Emmanuel, what do you say to that?

EMMANUEL PENN NKENG: I think you are very accurate. I was mostly talking about access, but at the same time, access and accessibility are linked to one another, so I believe in my own opinion, one can't go without the other.

JOLY MACFIE: Perhaps he said you can't have one without the other.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. I think Joly's point is important trying to distinguish between access and accessibility. Because accessibility in this group is specifically about people with disability. So this particular course is about Internet Governance and setting up the best way to deliver that so that it can be used by blind people, it can be used by people who have hearing loss, different types of disability, cognitive disability, and so forth. So I think that   yeah, I think sometimes there's a bit of misunderstanding about that. So yeah, okay. All right.

EMMANUEL PENN NKENG: Thank you very much for the differentiation. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you. And thank you very much for speaking. I appreciate that. And hopefully we can   there can be some other group that might fit better for the work that you are doing. Okay. Thank you. I really appreciate you speaking up.

Okay. All right. So probably we'll move on to talking about ISOC chapters. And I mentioned before that there's a number of ISOC chapters who have been very supportive of the work we've been doing and, really, if there are members working in accessibility for persons with disability, then it's a great opportunity to join a chapter if you haven't already. It's connecting with people in your country or city who have expertise in a wide variety of Internet related areas. It could be technical, legal, educational are just three examples, and there's many more, civil society for example. And so I will just pass over to Vashkar to talk a little bit more in detail about how his membership of the Bangladesh chapter has been really productive. So just very briefly, Vashkar, please.

VASHKAR BHATTACHARJEE: Can you hear me?

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes.

VASHKAR BHATTACHARJEE: Okay. Thank you very much. You know, if country level chapter really supportive, my chapter is very supportive. And even though when I was not the member of the Accessibility Standing Group, I was just engaged in the local chapter, and the people who are involved here, they are involved in the ICT for development field for long. Some of them are struggling or raising and working. So disability and inclusion issues are day by day becoming popular among the Internet Society Bangladesh chapter.

And finally, they have supported us to organize the workshop, one of the international workshops, and there was some challenges because we need to earning all the logistics. The team from Bangladesh really helped us a lot, and we didn't really bother much about the logistic issues.

One very interesting thing, they have selected some very accessible hotels which are highly accessible for all types of people with disabilities, which is really rare in our country, like Bangladesh, we don't have much accessibility infrastructure here. And sometimes even they are not considering the needs of people with disabilities. So that is a challenge for us. And the chapter was very respectful and really considered the accessibility and promoted that. Still we are working together in issues. We are engaging in several mainstreaming events which is organized by the Bangladesh chapter, and we are supporting them to make it more inclusive and inviting the people with disabilities to be involved with this process. Thank you very much, Gunela.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Vashkar. Yes, so it works both ways, doesn't it? And it's just building that culture of accessibility we were talking about before.

So I am just wondering, are there any people on the call who have had some experience with their local chapter in regards to accessibility for persons with disability? And has that been good, and how has it happened? So if there's anyone who would like to make a comment about that, I'd welcome it.

(No audible response)

Okay. Fine. So we are going to round this off by talking again about any ideas that people on the call have about the work we are doing, anything in regard to our Action Plan, and those particular goals we have for this year, which, again, I'll mention is partnerships with ISOC chapters and other key organizations, like disability organizations. Training and mentoring. This is, for example, when it came to disability leadership training, promotion and communications; when it comes to social media, for example; and improving that digital inclusion for persons with disability in ISOC itself. But if there are any particular ideas, suggestions, we are very pleased to receive them.

And if you don't want to speak, you can put it in the Chat, or you can contact us through Connect after the call, so there's plenty of ways of communicating with us.

Yes, Joly.

JOLY MACFIE: I will just say that, you know, we run webinars, and if anybody has an idea for a webinar or has someone who would like to present a webinar on some related topic, you know, someone in any of the chapters, you know, they can just come forward, and we will   you know, we can set it up.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Absolutely. Yeah, okay, so keep that in mind too.

All right. So I think we'll just round it off there and say, okay, we've covered off what we've done in 2022. Some of the things we are expecting to do this year   some of the exciting things that we expect to happen this year. And we are interested in involving our members as much as possible. So if there's anything, please get in touch on Connect, and we can continue this discussion online.

So I might

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: And Gunela.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, Judith.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Connect will be going away shortly.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Another victory for our good friend, Dr. Shabia, because Connect was not really accessible for people with disabilities. And hopefully the new AMS and the new program will be much better. Because it will be WCAG it will meet the WCAG standards, like Connect did not.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, that's definitely the aim, and so yes, thanks for reminding us on that. And it's been a bit unclear about when that's going to happen, but we will ye, undoubtedly, ISOC is going to let everyone know because it's going to be quite a bit of a transition. I think it's been supposedly happening in the background. So we'll see how we go.

All right. Emmanuel said being a new member, I would be very grateful if past reports can be made available to help me integrate quickly.

Thanks for that comment, and during this call, Joly's posted various excerpts from the wiki that Joly puts together about all those webinars, and Joly's posted a link there about everything that we do on the Accessibility Standing Group. So hopefully that will help.

Yeah, okay. Any last questions? You are welcome, Emmanuel. Any last comments, questions before we close the call? Yes, Joly.

JOLY MACFIE: I was typing in, I forgot what I was going to talk about. Oh, yes, so one thing I want to say is that hopefully we are all impressed by the work that Dr. Shabbir has done, and as we know, he is up for election, so if you have any opportunity to lobby your chapter voting delegate to put his X names to Dr. Shabbir's name in this election for the Board of Trustees, I encourage you strongly to do so.

And the other thing I wanted to mention was the I am going to share screen yet again is that there is this upcoming North American School of Internet Governance on June 10 and 11, 2023. If you are considering visiting Washington, DC, this would be a very good

weekend to do it. It's organized, as I say, about the Puerto Rico chapter of the Internet Society, and it's got a very   it's got a good   it's a single track event over two days, and it's right on topic for what we want to talk about. So I would just mention that. Thank you.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yeah. And it's got some very good speakers, persons with a lived experience of disability, and I think it indicates the   again, how what a couple of chapters, the Puerto Rico chapter has been very active in accessibility in various ways, and the Washington, DC, chapter. And of course, the New York chapter. So there's a lot there, a lot, but yeah. Yeah. So that's a big name there, Secretary General of the ITU, for example.

And also, I am just wondering, for those people on the call, would you be able to put a tick if you are a member of a chapter and just so we have an idea on that, that would be great. Would you just put a tick next to your name.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yeah, but a tick doesn't tell you what the chapter is, so you should put the chapter in the Chat.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. All right. So that adds a little bit more. So I can put in what I am a member of.

Okay. Great. Any others? Niger, yes, Morocco, yes. Thank you, Zakari. And Emmanuel is ISOC Nigeria, great. And Joly is all over.

JOLY MACFIE: Oh, I forgot Yemen as well.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Oh, Yemen. Okay. You do get around virtually, don't you?

JOLY MACFIE: Oh, yes. They are all places I have lived, except for Chennai. I have never lived in Chennai.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Oh, right, there you go. I didn't know that. See? Something new about Joly.

JOLY MACFIE: I grew up in Yemen.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Wow. I'll have to have a conversation with you about that one day.

Okay. So Abraham is Ghana, and then we have Emmanuel, Nigeria. So okay. That's good to know. And are there any   Abraham or Emmanuel, any discussion about accessibility in those two chapters? Abraham, can you speak at all or put something in the Chat?

Abraham: Okay. The accessibility of Internet in Ghana as a whole is a little bit challenging. At my school, we set up an Internet accessibility for students, which is one of the (?) that happened. We are doing our best to help so that every child in the school can have access to the Internet so that they can have learning in their homes while school has closed. So this is what we are working on.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Okay. Thank you. And is that for persons with disability or general access?

Abraham: Actually, in Ghana, when it comes to disability, many times they have their own sector, and those who are not disability have their own sector. So we don't blame them. A few schools in Ghana are those with disability and those without disability. But currently where I am, we don't have any disability there.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Right, okay. All right. That could be quite an interesting conversation at some other stage, but I think I get the picture.

And Emmanuel is Cameroon chapter. Is there anything there that you know if your chapter is active in accessibility for persons with disability? Emmanuel?

EMMANUEL PENN NKENG: Okay. Generally, we have issues with accessibility here in Cameroon. That's a sure fact. But this was even work. The COVID 19 was difficult, especially on women and people with disabilities. Many people don't have devices which they can connect to the Internet which are accessible. So when COVID 19 came out, a good number of schools here in Cameroon went to online education. So that's where I personally, I was particularly touched because I know a lot of people with disabilities that they couldn't follow along with education, they couldn't learn properly. That's what I can say for now.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, yes. Thank you. Thank you very much. Yes. During COVID, it was very difficult for people because they couldn't   they had to rely on Internet, and if it wasn't accessible, yeah, a lot of problems. Yes. So good to know. All right.

Okay. So

JOLY MACFIE: Hand up.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, Joly.

JOLY MACFIE: Just to say, to follow up on Emmanuel's point, is that within the field of disability, there is the obvious things like deaf people and blind people, but cognitive disabilities is something which is, you know, it's widespread, and you know, it's just as much a disability as the other things. And so   and there are ways of dealing with it in

terms of, like, Internet accessibility, of making things easier to understand, making, you know, things less complicated, and so on. And in some ways, sometimes it's at odds with, okay, you want to add captions and you want to add this for accessibility, but at the same time, for someone who is cognitively   has cognitive problems, if you overload them with captions and this and that, it's too much for them to actually take in. So it's not an easy it's not an easy topic, and there are a lot of facets to this, which is the kind of work which I think we are going to have to continue   you know, I have suggested that we might, you know, that we really need to have a subcommittee that just looks at cognitive issues within Internet accessibility. And I always   you know, it's not something that I am an expert in, but I'd like someone to be looking at it.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yeah. No, good point, good point. Yeah. Okay.

All right. So I think the other point that Joly made was about Dr. Mohammed Shabbir, who is running for election to continue his term on the Board of Trustees, and then he has the opportunity to ensure that that high level policy, the reporting about that is discussed at the board level.

So if any of those people who indicated that particular chapters they are involved with or a member of and find their voting delegates, you know you have now heard directly from Mohammed Shabbir as a board member, and you can suggest to your voting delegate.

JOLY MACFIE: I will note, Gunela, that we are now over time.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: We are over time. Good. Okay. That's fine. So I wish to say thank you to everyone. We have been going for 90 minutes. It's quite a while. And thank you to everyone who participated in the call, and thank you very much to the captionist and the interpreters. So we'll say good afternoon, good evening, et cetera, to everyone, and look forward to more online on the sessions.

(Chorus of good byes.)