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(ITU) للاتصالات الدولي الاتحاد في والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم أجراه الضوئي بالمسح تصوير نتاج (PDF) الإلكترونية النسخة هذه والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم في المتوفرة الوثائق ضمن أصلية ورقية وثيقة من نقلاً.

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## First Lady of Egypt Suzanne Mubarak

President and Founder of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement



*“I am delighted to accept this Award as a symbol of what we have all achieved together in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, and as a testament that we still have a long way to go...”*

Winner of an ITU World Telecommunication and Information Society Award 2008, Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of Egypt, is a social scientist. She spent her early career studying disadvantaged communities to find better ways of improving their living conditions. By giving a voice to those who are among the least represented in society, Mrs Mubarak has been instrumental in creating institutions to formulate policies, strategies and initiatives directed at empowering women and ensuring the well-being of children and young people. She is the Chairperson of the Advisory Board of Egypt's National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and President of the National Council for Women.

In her keynote speech in Cairo for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, Mrs Mubarak congratulated ITU on dedicating this year's celebration to connecting people with disabilities. Upon receiving the Award, she said she was delighted to accept it “as a symbol of what we have all achieved together in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, and as a testament that we still have a long way to go, and what we can accomplish together in the future”.

Mrs Mubarak went on to describe how information and communication technologies (ICT) have the power to break down barriers, allowing vulnerable and marginalized groups to participate in the community, and building their capacities for self-fulfilment. “ICT are real enablers, and their potential for change does not cease to astonish us,” she said.

The following extracts from her keynote speech highlight the First Lady's commitment to building an inclusive information society, using ICT.

In 2003, Egypt's First Lady founded the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement. It focuses, among other things, on developing people's capacities, creating avenues for cooperative action and making silent voices heard. In September 2007, the Movement launched a Cyber Peace Initiative, in partnership with ITU, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, and private-sector sponsors. The initiative aims to use the power of ICT to promote a culture of peace.

## Investing in ICT to rekindle the hopes of the disabled

In Egypt, we are investing in ICT to rekindle the hopes of the disabled by increasing their confidence, their independence, and by giving them a sense of control in their lives. In partnership with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations, we have been drawing on these powerful technologies to provide a better quality of life, and to facilitate access to education, employment and social opportunities, as well as in providing professional rehabilitation and awareness programmes. We have been working hard to enhance the skills of trainers and educators to make the maximum use of ICT in their capacity-building programmes. In turn, all these initiatives have opened new horizons for the disabled in terms of networking, solidarity, jobs and independent living.

Through our initiatives we are also supporting and encouraging innovation in the use of universal design in generic software and assistive technology products, as well as introducing accessibility techniques. In this regard, we are proud of the IT clubs in all Egypt's governorates. And we are in the process of developing more mobile units to strengthen our presence in remote and underprivileged areas across the country. Furthermore, we are working to tailor our education programmes for the disabled, introducing modern education and equipment, and modifying the curricula to respond to the needs of students, with a particular focus on skills development through ICT.

However, in spite of this progress, there are still considerable challenges that we must address in order to

maximize the impact of our endeavours. We still have a very long road ahead. Across the region, the majority of disabled people have become victims of the digital divide, as they continue to face numerous barriers in terms of access to ICT and the skills required to use them effectively. While some suffer from lack of awareness and training opportunities, many others simply cannot afford the steep costs of acquiring, installing and maintaining computers, as well as obtaining special assistive hardware and software. Unfortunately, the problem of discrimination is also still very much alive throughout our societies. We need to reverse these negative trends by listening to people with special needs, and integrating their ideas and their solutions into our policies and initiatives.

During my involvement in social work for many years, I have had the chance to work with adults and children with various disabilities and impairments. And I can assure you that their world, despite the obvious frustrations, is a fascinating one filled with promise, courage, endurance, special joys and remarkable success stories.

For many of these people whom I was fortunate enough to meet, genuine empowerment, like for all of us, means being able to uphold their dignity and exercise their human rights. It entails feeling that they are part of a community — a community that helps to meet their needs and values their contributions. It represents having the opportunity to participate, knowing that others would respect their views and beliefs.

It is through listening to these individuals, and recognizing the obstacles that they face in their everyday lives,

*“ We need to reverse negative trends by listening to people with special needs, and integrating their ideas and their solutions into our policies and initiatives. ”*

## Laureates

*Youth discuss the Cyber Peace Initiative during an interactive session at ITU TELECOM AFRICA 2008*



that I would like to stress today the importance for all of us to develop more inclusive strategies to address this very serious developmental issue. We need to strengthen our partnerships and alliances, and together find ways of removing these obstacles that face disabled people, making ICT more accessible and affordable. We must ensure the implementation of national, regional and international instruments and declarations that promote the positive use of ICT. We must also recognize and support their rights as citizens and participants in the social and economic activities of their communities. I believe that the Cairo Declaration, which was issued in 2007 as the outcome of the regional conference on sharing experience on best practice in ICT services for people with disabilities, is a very positive step in this direction. I hope that our coordinated work will continue to contribute in furthering ties of cooperation between all relevant partners in the Arab and African Regions.

*“Young people are our hope for an equitable and peaceful information and knowledge society.”*


## Empowering youth

In pursuing our objectives, we must recognize that young people are our hope for an equitable and peaceful information and knowledge society. It is essential that we use every opportunity to empower them, to maximize the benefits of this new era of technology, with innovative ideas and practices, and work with them as equal and active partners.

I still clearly recall the declaration presented in a previous ITU Youth Forum, where young people committed themselves to using ICT as a tool to promote peace, friendship, democracy, justice and love throughout the African continent, and they called upon their leaders to do

likewise. As a response, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement organized an international youth forum in September 2007 in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, under the banner, “the youth of power, the power of youth; youth speak, we listen”. And listen we did, to 800 young leaders, from all over the world. Youth that were determined and confident in their collective ability to eliminate violence and build a more peaceful and sustainable world. The *Cyber Peace Initiative* that emanated from the forum has put into practice the dreams and aspirations of these young leaders to use ICT as a tool to promote intercultural understanding and tolerance between nations, enhance human security across borders, and foster a culture of peace, in the hearts and minds of global citizens.

I invite and welcome the young people who attended the cyberpeace camps during ITU TELECOM AFRICA 2008 to join us in this exciting new initiative. We have committed ourselves to cooperating and networking harder to ensure that the youth of Africa work together to make this continent the best place in the whole world.

As we celebrate together World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, let us reaffirm our dreams, and rededicate ourselves to the well-being of our continent and its technological advance. And let us open the doors to the resourcefulness and ingenuity of our African youth and provide them with opportunities to take on the challenge of improving the conditions of the continent, and watch them rise to the occasion. 

## Laureates

Andrea Saks first became involved in ITU work in 1991. Self-funded, she attends many meetings of study groups and focus groups of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), promoting the inclusion of accessibility standards. Through attending Study Group 1 of the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in its consideration of Question 20, she also acts as a bridge between the two Sectors on the issue.

Ms Saks has been key in the creation of accessibility events at ITU, and is the convener of the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF). She is also the coordinator of the Internet Governance Forum's Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability.

## Andrea Saks

### Renowned advocate of ICT for people with disabilities



*“Information deprivation and bad access is the problem, not the disability.”*

Winner of an ITU World Telecommunication and Information Society Award 2008, Andrea Saks is the daughter of deaf parents, whom, from an early age, she helped to interact with the hearing world. Her father, Andrew Saks, was a pioneer in developing telecommunication technology for people with hearing difficulties. Ms Saks thus has a strong personal background and interest in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) for people with disabilities. At the Award ceremony in Cairo, she underlined her commitment to making ICT accessible to all, telling her story in her own words:

I started working with my parents as a two-year-old relay service. This is a service where the hearing person makes the call for the deaf person so they can communicate with the outside world. It must have been a horrific experience for my parents to rely on a two-year-old, but I thought I did a great job. I got better at it by the time I was three. But by the time I was fourteen, I probably was another nightmare, because teenagers are not all that cooperative.

My father and mother met through the oddest circumstance, and it depicts the problem of what deaf people went through, and in some cases, still go through... My father stopped to help this person change a flat tyre in the middle of the night — as you did in those days, without fear — and he was surprised that this man knew to face him and speak to him, so he could lip read. My father asked him “how do you know?” The man said “well, there’s this beautiful

deaf girl living next door". That was my mother. The gentleman didn't tell my father his name. But my father had written down his licence plate number, and this helped him trace where my mother was.

My father was not born deaf — but was robbed of his hearing through a mastoid infection. He was an oral speaker. He had the advantage of having parents who had the funds to educate him. So he didn't know any sign language. My mother, who was also totally deaf, was the daughter of a dual national and was educated in Britain... She was an oral speaker too. This was unusual in those times; there were very few oral deaf people as not everyone had the funds to educate their deaf children to speak.

My father was an engineer. He really was angry that he couldn't use the phone as it prevented him from participating in business life. By chance, he met a wonderful character by the name of Robert Weitbrecht, a deaf physicist, who used to do radio TTY ship-to-shore with a telex machine. And with his other friend, Dr James Marsters, who was also deaf, the three of them decided they could convert this technology into something they could use over the phone. They had very little money to do it; they had no support from industry, because it was a very specialized market and therefore it was not economically vi-



*Andrew and Jean Saks, the parents of Andrea, were both deaf, and, as a child, she helped them communicate with others*

able. But they did it — they invented a modem.

However, they had no printing device. They had to use old surplus teleprinters... So they created Teletypewriters for the Deaf Incorporated (TDI), now known as Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. They got the equipment up and running, and started talking over the phone — typing the words in the original real-time text (which, by the way, is now standardized by ITU). And they were able to reconvert

old, surplus teleprinters which were donated to TDI.

The deaf community got their shirt sleeves rolled up and reconditioned those machines... and they shipped them across the country. And they did it all themselves. It's remarkable. But looking back, I was a little annoyed — I'd lost my powerful place in life. They didn't need me any more. But they had to communicate with the outside world, and relay services weren't quite up and running yet. So I still had some involvement.

The phenomenon was so important that all my mother's friends began to write to her, saying "we want this too". So they (my parents) encouraged me to go to England, and with the British Post Office we started the first deaf telephone network that was international. And we did the first deaf transatlantic call (in 1975)... It was a resounding success... it showed interpersonal text com-



munication was something that people needed and could do, and it's one of the reasons that fax slowly exploded into another wonderful tool we used... Hearing people may not realize it, but the deaf gave you the right to access data across the voice telephone network.

Because there were differences in different countries... this made new barriers for deaf people. One of the problems was that the British wanted to use Telecom Gold, which was an early form of e-mail. So they destroyed the network that enabled American deaf and British deaf people to communicate, because they wanted to do something better. There was no standardization — none whatsoever... We were isolated again. Other countries also wanted to give deaf people communication, and began to make text phones... France went to Minitel; Italy and Germany had other techniques.

That's when I got to ITU. They nearly threw me out because I didn't have any credentials, but fortunately, the US State Department representative decided it might be an interesting idea, and they officially put me into a delegation. That was 1991, and I've been coming to ITU ever since. And what I tried to do at ITU was to put a human face on technology, to make engineers understand that the modem didn't terminate the call, the human being did. I want people to understand that ITU was very receptive to me as an individual. The resistance came from ignorance, or the fact they felt that they were going to have to spend too much money. Or, the fact that they didn't understand how easy or how difficult it might be to implement something. We did have a wonderful standard that was called V.18, which invisibly translated all the flavours of text phones... Also, e-mail came along, instant messaging came along, and deaf people began to use other kinds of communication. But nothing is quite like real-time text.

Lack of standardization was the problem that caused the fracturing of the deaf telephone network. Standardization is necessary. The most important thing we can do is promote good standards that include accessibility features; mainstream them, not make them special... The feeling I have is that now the engineers get it. They really understand. I walk into a room. They know I am there, we work together. I look at a document, we see how we can put in certain features to make it better. I've been working with IPTV, which is Internet protocol television. I've been working with NGN, the next-generation network, so that, within the requirements documents, people's needs are expressed.

The next step is implementation. This is up to legislators and regulators, because industry does have to be encouraged; because it does sometimes cost extra money to do these things... Ten per cent of the world has a disability of some kind. Information deprivation and bad access is the problem, not the disability.

I really hope that all of you... encourage people to use universal design from the beginning; that we have people who design whatever it is — whether it's a gateway... or a device, or a software package, or a television programme of some kind that is going to be emitted through a set-top box — and that we make standards. ITU has been leading the world in accessibility standards. I'm very much an ITU lady. They gave me a home; they basically support what I do, and now we want all of you to support ITU in standardization. We need to have a global standards body that encourages outside people to join, so that standards are accessible and are worldwide and enable disabled people to access ICT.

## The DAISY Consortium



*“DAISY is not a hardware product or a software product. DAISY is a set of knowledge, to make publications accessible for everybody.”*

People with reading disabilities cannot access the rich world of printed books or online text. Images, and systems such as Braille, can help, but bringing assistance into the digital age is the DAISY Consortium — one of the three winners of the ITU World Telecommunication and Information Society Award 2008.

The DAISY Consortium was formed in 1996 by talking-book libraries, in order to lead a worldwide transition to the “Digital Accessible Information System,” or DAISY. Its mission is to develop, integrate and promote international DAISY standards and technologies that enable people with print disabilities to access materials from mainstream publishers, governments, and libraries. Members of the Consortium actively

promote the DAISY Standard, which allows material to be accessed in a feature-rich format that is easy to navigate (see box).

Accepting the award at the ceremony in Cairo, President of the DAISY Consortium Hiroshi Kawamura explained that “DAISY is not a hardware product or a software product. DAISY is a set of knowledge, to make publications accessible for everybody”. This includes people who cannot read. “We are going to build a library network across the world which will be shared by people with all types of disabilities, as well as people who are living with an indigenous language without any written script, but with a rich culture, and people who are illiterate. Those are target groups of the DAISY Consortium,” said Mr Kawamura.

### What makes DAISY special

When normally sighted readers use an encyclopedia or a cookery book, they can easily find the precise page, paragraph or picture they want, bookmark it, move between relevant sections or find an item in an index. This is much less easy when the book is presented as a continuous audio reading. With the DAISY system, text (in audio format), images and graphic content — even in complex page layouts — can be navigated by people with reading difficulties in the same way as the content of ordinary books. The DAISY Standard has helped to open up a new world of information for people who cannot read print due to a visual, physical, or cognitive disability, or simply because texts are not available in their native language.

## Laureates

*DAISY is a powerful tool in promoting disaster preparedness, because it can make information accessible to all. This was recognized at a DAISY conference held in Phuket, Thailand in 2007 (see right), which issued the Phuket Declaration on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities*

Hiroshi Kawamura



## The development of DAISY

Mr Kawamura's career path mirrors the history of the DAISY Consortium. He first became aware of the needs of people with reading disabilities when he was a librarian at the University of Tokyo, Japan. "Out of the millions of books in the largest library in the country in 1977, the first successful blind student at the University of Tokyo couldn't read a single one. This fact inspired me to develop library and information services for blind students," he explained. After realizing that other institutions had similar problems, he aimed for the bigger goal of helping students throughout Japan, and worldwide.

With the advent of digital technology in the 1980s, Mr Kawamura began to help promote these new methods of access with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). From 1990 to 1995, he was Chairman of the IFLA Section of Libraries for the Blind (SLB). "The last official work I did as Chairman was to host an emergency meeting on the development of international standards for digital talking books, during the IFLA General Council in Istanbul in 1995. The conclusion of this meeting was that the standard should be developed within two years," Mr Kawamura said. He volunteered to take responsibility for implementing the decision.

Six member organizations of SLB established the DAISY Consortium in 1996. They were the Japanese Association of Libraries for the Blind; the Spanish National Organization of the Blind; the Royal National Institution for the Blind (United Kingdom); the Swiss Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired; the Dutch Library for Visually and Print Handicapped Students and Professionals, and the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille, together with the

Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired. Now, there are 14 Full Members of the DAISY Consortium and over 55 Associate Members (typically, national talking-book libraries), and more than 20 Friends (including developers of production and/or playback hardware or software).

Working for the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD), Mr Kawamura was able to focus on developing DAISY, incorporating the results of trials of the system by users around the world. In 1997, the DAISY Consortium decided that its file format needed to be based on standards being developed for the Internet, such as the synchronized multimedia integration language (SMIL). Appropriately pronounced "smile", this is an easy-to-learn HTML-like language that enables simple authoring of interactive audiovisual presentations. "The DAISY Consortium has been heavily involved in SMIL development, in order to achieve the long-term goal of synchronization of audio, text, and graphics based on widely accepted open, non-proprietary, and interoperable standards," Mr Kawamura explained. The DAISY 2.0 Specification was released in 1998, followed by DAISY 2.02 in February 2001 and DAISY 3 in March 2002. "I learned a lot through this development process, and am very pleased to know that today the majority of library services for people with print disabilities use DAISY as the *de facto* standard," Mr Kawamura commented.

## DAISY for all

The *DAISY for All* project started in 2003 under the leadership of Mr Kawamura, and funded by the Nippon Foundation. The project is the Consortium's primary means of outreach to developing countries, where appropriate



*Participants at a DAISY workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, learned how to produce materials using the system*

Hiroshi Kawamura

local organizations are encouraged to become partners. Activities are carried out to help deploy the DAISY system, and so bring people with disabilities into the mainstream of access to information technology. Resource Centres have been established in India and Thailand, and seminars and workshops have taken place in Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam.

Mr Kawamura also cited an example of a workshop that had been held in South Africa just before ITU TELECOM AFRICA 2008. "We have just finished a week-long workshop in Johannesburg for 27 trainees," he said. "Among them, we had six blind trainees, two quadriplegic trainees, one deaf trainee, and representatives from the autism community, mental health community, and dyslexic community, and special schools for students with multiple disabilities."

The participants were not only introduced to the DAISY system; they also learned how to use it to produce materials. "The people who attended were very happy when they were able to achieve producing a multimedia, fully accessible version of the *Resource Manual for Disability and HIV/AIDS Training*, edited by Disabled People South Africa," Mr Kawamura said.

An important development under the *DAISY for All* project is open source software called the Adaptive Multimedia Information System (AMIS), which was originally created by JSRPD. The software is used for playing multimedia DAISY books at various speeds, with the full ability to search and navigate text and indexes, and is available in around 20 languages, including Afrikaans, Hindi, Thai, Malay and Sinhalese.

## Working with others

Development of a human-oriented information society is a core concept in the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), said Mr Kawamura, and there is a "beautiful synergy" between the WSIS Plan of Action and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that came into force on 3 May 2008. Both recognize the principle of universal design, which, combined with assistive technologies, can "really implement the dream of promoting full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of social activities; in particular, education, training, employment and sharing of knowledge and information".

Mr Kawamura called for joint action by governments, industry and civil society. As an example of how businesses are collaborating with the DAISY Consortium, he mentioned a joint announcement with Microsoft Corporation on 7 May 2008 that an open source, free plug-in has been released to allow Microsoft Office Word documents to be translated into DAISY contents with one click of the mouse. This will make huge amounts of material newly accessible.

Government and civil society will also be greatly involved in improving accessibility. The DAISY Consortium is very happy to cooperate with all stakeholders, Mr Kawamura said, adding "I accept this prestigious award as an encouragement for further development of our work to realize our dream."