



## Economic and Social Council

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**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2011/100.



## Statement\*

The United Nations reports that 10-15 per cent of the world's population are persons with disabilities, 80 per cent of whom live in rural areas. The United Nations further reports that 80-90 per cent of persons with disabilities in developing countries are unemployed. One of the major contributing factors for these abysmal statistics is the lack of access to education. The global community must address this situation as soon as possible to invest in the future of children with disabilities and the world. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted on 13 December 2006 and presently has over 145 signatories and 99 ratifications. This seminal document addresses the rights of persons with disabilities to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In article 24 on education, it specifically addresses the right of children with disabilities to obtain an education on an equal basis with others. The article goes on to address the removal of barriers such as architectural barriers and the provision of information in an appropriate format for children who are blind, deaf or both. In addition to article 24, article 9 of the Convention addresses accessibility of the built environment, the so-called spinal cord of the Convention. Greater attention is now focused on issues such as education of persons with disabilities since a mechanism is in place to monitor progress.

The Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) wishes to present a proposal for consideration to develop a model of accessibility guidelines for schools. As an international non-governmental organization, GAATES can provide a global overview on technical specifications for accessibility and can undertake this short project at a very low cost and in a timely fashion.

The objective is to provide a document on creating accessible schools that contains guidance on both the process and the technical specifications that architects and builders can use to implement provisions for children, teachers and parents who have disabilities. Additionally, the document will provide guidance on communication techniques and accessible technologies that can be used to support inclusion of children with disabilities. The document will include architectural drawings and explanations of the relevance of particular features and will be produced in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. It will be made available free of charge on the GAATES website. If training sessions are requested, they can be provided in a variety of languages.

We respectfully request that you consider our request to submit a fully developed proposal. GAATES is the leading international organization dedicated to the promotion of accessibility of the built and virtual environments. GAATES has over 500 members worldwide and has been widely recognized as the leading international organization dedicated to accessibility of the built and virtual environments.

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\* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.