Module 4

RICHARD: Can you see the screen everyone? Yep. Ok. Ok welcome to our Module 4 of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum Online Disability Equality Capacity Building Course. We're certainly zipping through these and I hope you are all getting something out of it. Today we're going to be looking at access, assistive devices, innovation in those areas. I am Richard Rieser General Secretary and today on this unit I am joined by Sarah Kamau, our acting Chair of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum from Kenya, and Nathalie Murphy our Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum Executive member for the Caribbean. We will also see clips from two other member of our Executive, Steve Estey from Canada, and Dickson Mveyange from Tanzanian Association of the Deaf who represents deaf people on our Executive. So they are not here in person but they have pre‑recorded what they are going to say. So this should all be very exciting if it works.

    So, over to you Sarah to introduce this unit.

SARAH: Thank you Richard. Like Richard has said, my name is Sarah Kamau from Kenya, the acting Chair for CDPF and I am happy to introduce to you this session which is Module 4, on human rights. A fundamental right is for disabled people to gain access and participation on equal level with other regardless of impairment. Disabled people have struggled for many years to adapt to society's lived, physical and information environment for this to happen. The first international human rights treaty to explicitly mention it was the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008.

    There had been clauses in previous treaties, national laws, building codes and standards that had partially acknowledged the need for access in the previous 120 years, all of these were fought for by disabled people and their organisations and some non‑disabled‑led organisations.

    People with sensory impairments were in the vanguard arguing for the teaching and use of Braille, sign language, gaining concessions in a minority of countries, usually in [*video frozen*] next. Richard next.

RICHARD: Yeah, ok.

SARAH: The UN CRPD ‑

RICHARD: Do you want me to go back or are you all right? You missed the last bit UN CRPD Article 9 establishes binding obligation on states ‑

SARAH: I missed the last one ‑

RICHARD: Consequently rights SARAH: Consequently rights. RICHARD: You go on to the next one, here we go.

SARAH: I will go on to the next one now. You can put it up Richard.

RICHARD: Are you not seeing it? It's up there, Introduction 2.

SARAH: The provisions of ‑ I can even maybe put the next one so that I don't take long to look for it. The provision of this means of communication were often provided in segregated, sometimes residential schools, colleges, and sheltered workplaces. The built environment, transport, libraries, shops, hospitals, schools, colleges, universities housing, places of entertainment and political processes, indeed all of normal human life was not adapted for disabled people to take part. Where possible we had to be rehabilitated to be as normal as possible. [inaudible] Medically trained rehabilitation professionals and they, and some disabled people faced with huge number of barriers in the environment, designed a wide range of assistive devices to make living in an inaccessible world easier.

    The idea that built environments, transport and systems of communication must be adapted and renewed, universally designed so there are no barriers, gained support in the last 50 years as disabled people and Disabled People's Organisation become better at expressing our goals through social model thinking. This set the stage for the UNCRPD and the incorporation of the ideas and principles into the Sustainable Development Goals, for example, 11. Article 11.2 and Goal 11.7.

    The COVID‑19 pandemic has tested the robustness of our societies and how have incorporated these principles into our day‑to‑day activities and they have been wanting. Round the world and across the Commonwealth our Disabled People's Organisation have had to push governments to provide signed announcement and information to provide essential information in Easy Read and pictograph. Those who are literate wit information and those who are blind or visual impairment have been able to benefit from availability of access programmes, text to speech, IT operating systems have shown the way forward. As adaptions are now standard on iPad, laptops and on smartphones many millions of disabled people have access to these systems.

All the surveys by DPOs show that mental anxiety has risen across disabled people, especially those with psychosocial conditions. This tells us that access is not just about communicating an emergency but how the message is communicated and how disabled people are supported. As we build back better, there has never been a better time to argue for access and the provision of assistive technology to avert the colossal wastage of human potential and maintain business as usual will mean for the world and its disabled inhabitants. We know how to do this better, let us put it into practice for all our sakes. Thank you.

I will now introduce the language that the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum use and maybe just make a correction that this module is on assistive device technology, not on human rights. So in the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, we use language and we want to bring it to context why we use for example disabled people. Why we still choose to call ourselves disabled people in the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum? It's because of the development of the social model of development. In the 19th and 20th century, a disabled people's medical condition was thought to be the root because of their exclusion from society, an approach now referred to as the medical or individual model of disability. We use the social model of disability where the barriers of environment, attitude and organisation are what disable people with impairment and lead to prejudice and discrimination.

So to call ourselves persons with disabilities is to accept that we are objects and we are powerless. We also view ourselves as united by a common oppression, so are proud to identify as disabled people rather than persons with disabilities. When we are talking about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities we will use people or persons with disabilities. I hope you get the context. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you Sarah. We will hear from you a bit later. Here it's very important when we're talking about access, not just to think about ramps and lifts and Braille sign language. There are many millions of disabled people who have intellectual impairments, and have difficulties with reading so UN Convention is provided in an Easy Read format. Easy Read means very simple and to the point language, and pictogram, this is just to make the point the basic principles which we covered last week, or the week before last are still here. People are free to make their own choice. No‑one will be discriminated against. Disabled people have the same rights to be included as anybody else. Disabled people has to be respected for who they are. Everyone should have equal opportunities. Everyone should have equal access so there we are, what we're talking about today, access is one of the key principles of the entire Convention. Men and women should have equal opportunities and disabled children have evolving capacity.

So what is accessibility as defined by the Convention? One of key thrusts of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is to create accessibility by universal design, in many cases that has not happened yet, and accessibility standards. One of our key jobs is to get standards in place by our Government, accessibility is a human rights principle running throughout the Convention. Inaccessibility, discrimination and freedom of movement, independent living, physical, informational and technological barriers prevent persons with disabilities fully participating in society on an equal basis with others. Inaccessibility also relates to negative attitudes in society, the perpetuated images of persons with disabilities as being slow, less talent, unable to make decisions for example. Key element to make sure equal rights is improving the accessibility of the built environment, information and communication environment, transport and other facilities, goods and services open to the public. The Convention takes a twin‑track approach to access. It's as you saw in Article 3 just now, it's an overarching principle. It has a stand‑alone article, Article 9, which people should familiarise themselves and comes up in articles throughout the treaty. Wherever it says being treated on a equal basis with others implies access. And specifically in Article 20 personal mobility, Article 21, expression freedom of expression and information, which has particular things to say about Braille and sign language. Article 24 which talks about modes and means of education to be accessible. Article 26 where focus is on habilitation and rehabilitation, Article 27 on work and employment, Article 28 on adequate standard of living, Article 29 participation in political life and Article 30 participation, excuse me, participation in cultural life recreation leisure and sport. Each of those named articles has specific reference to access.

GEMMA: Richard, you need to slow down.

RICHARD: Yes thank you. Basically you can't get round the Convention without seeing access as a key issue.

    Now, linked to this, is Article 19. One of our goals in the disability movement for a long time, against the institutionalisation or being kept in homes where people look after us without us having any say about it, has been to recognise the equal rights of all persons to live in the community with choice, equal to others and shall take affect if an appropriate measure to facilitate our full enjoyment of these rights and full exclusion. Some of the principles of the independent living movement are appropriate and accessible information, adequate income, appropriate and accessible health and social care, fully accessible transport system, full access to the environment, adequate provision of technical aids and equipment, availability of accessible and adapted housing, adequate provision of personal assistance, available of inclusive education and training, equal opportunities for employment, availability of for independent advocacy and self‑advocacy, and peer counselling. Now you can see that again through the principle of independent living, access runs right through the middle like a name in a stick of rock.

    Now sometimes very often, you can see access being got wrong. The first picture at the top here shows two or three people trying to drag a woman in a wheelchair on to a train because it's been designed in such a way that there is a gap of 9, 10 inches, a foot. Below is one where a guy is wheeling himself on to a train that is flush with the platform. Universal design would mean that all trains were flush with the platform. Or the second picture shows three people dragging a woman in a wheelchair up some steps. Universal design would be to have ramps and rails everywhere. The third one is about a visually impaired person using a white cane, where is it, where is over there. The man who is trying to help her is saying go over, there not realising that she doesn't know where over there is. You must always give directions which relate to things people can understand. Technology now as an alternative to that is providing audio description using GPS so that people can find a way. That doesn't work for everybody so a thing that everybody can do is get rid of obstacles off the footway, get rid of trip faults and so on that people who can't see can find their way around easily.

    The fourth set of pictures here, don't shout at a deaf person, hoping they will hear. It's the cartoon. Underneath that it's the young deaf woman using sign language on a smartphone. Modern technology has closed the gap enormously for people with sensory impairment. Then the last one is a block of type at the top which is quite hard to read in small typeface. Underneath are two people with learning difficulty holding up a sign saying how to Easy Read. Saying that things should have pictograms, should have plain in simple language in large print, that everybody can understand it.

    it's an introduction to access. Here is an example of Harjot from Amritsar in India, he can speak and understand but cannot walk and has weak hands. When Harjot was 3.5 years old his father died and his mother abandoned him because of his impairment. So common. Because receiving a support from the disability organisation Motivation, Harjot was supported by carers, he used to crawl to get round which was hurting his hand and legs, also unable to sit up right. What Motivation do is train up teams in many countries to have the expertise to fit people with the right wheelchairs and provide the right support.

    Now, he could push himself and when someone else moved him around, he felt unstable. So after receiving his Moti‑Go which is a custom made wheelchair that fitted him she could also have a tray on the front and he now is suddenly empowered. He now has good postural support which means he can use his hand and other tasks thank for the removable tray. On his new wheelchair. Now if I tell you that there are 75 million disabled people who would benefit from a wheelchair in low and middle‑income countries, you can see how important it is to set up this rehabilitative service as part of providing access but of course just having that won't help you. Here is Stella from Nairobi, she found an interesting thing to do during COVID of doing exercises and then did a video clip and is now actually making a living out of doing this. Or Waldah from Uganda who could just about crawl, but her mother was told by the neighbours that she had produced snakes. The other sorts of things we looked at in Module 1. Lucy's boss the mum, told her to choose between her child or the job, the pair had little hope for the future. Like 91% of other children in Uganda she's not in school, disabled children Waldah mum found a teacher school where she could be included, she was very lucky to find that there are not that many round. Through mixing and blending with children Waldah can now later speak and feed herself and is learning at school. Again motivation come in here they have an All Stars programme that is working across schools with children, 70 disabled children in Uganda to do play with other children so that the barriers of the stigma are broken down. It's not just about the physical access it also about accessing the mind.

Anika in India, stigma and discrimination round disability is rife, disabled people often excluded. They are treated unfairly, unable to access healthcare care and prone to health complications. Anika was determine to be independent, educate and mobile. She again got a wheelchair from motivation, around a year ago now and she now uses it for tutoring students in her home, for visiting friends and family for going to do higher studies at college.

So now we're going to look at a film about accessible India.

    Video playing]

>>: It's so difficult to catch buses to go round on the road or even to go to a restaurant there are a lot of barriers in external and internal environment. For example, somebody in a wheelchair want to go out, and access the payment or footpath, the footpath do not have the footpaths do not have curb ramps, there are bollards, the spacing is not adequate,, the information is no go and the surface is so rough and uneven that one cannot go with a wheelchair on their own. Also there are issues for climbing of the buses most of the buses do not have ramps. Even if you design the bus stop and bus shelters and the ramp is not opened regularly, and the people on the wheelchairs who are

boarding from the road will not be able to do it.

Also the shops where we want to go for shopping, eating or just buying a book, the shop do not have ramps. If there are steps, steps are too high and they are no handles so how do assume that people with disabilities can access these areas. We're more dependent, and it's just an obligation when we're always asking people to do things for us. The whole worry is how the population of India that are disabled can be mainstreamed by providing an accessible and inclusive environment. Now someone is working with the Government, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to make India accessible through the Accessible India Campaign. The campaign looks at all the capital cities in the states, and 100 million buildings inaccessible. We're also developing a portal and an app. From there you can take a photo on your smartphone and upload the photo so that people will come to know what are the issues, where the barriers are, and the concerned authorities and stakeholders can make it accessible. Accessible India Campaign the tagline is [non-English] that means Accessible India, empowered India.

RICHARD: The interesting thing about that film and that's where you can get more information about this campaign, is that one of the things we fought for in London with Transport for London is that every bus has to check its ramp every day before it leaves the bus station, because they have a habit of breaking down. It was interesting seeing the driver on the bus there really not knowing what to do with getting the ramp out on his bus. I think there is a need for training for all public transport workers, to be able to provide access for people. So there's plenty to do there.

Then beyond that we have assistive technology which is the application of organised ladies and gentlemen and skills, related to assistive products including systems in services. Now there are many hundreds of assistive technologies, both medium and low tech and hi‑tech. States should formulate policies and law to support the development production and distribution of such products. These can range from heavy high grip eating irons to computer assisted reading pen that you go along the line and it will actually speak to you the words of a book. Incentive on research and development, ensure disabled people and their families obtain knowledge on what's available, measure should be taken to ensure that this activity is available locally and at a cheap level. Monitor the gaps that are there.

Now, over to Nathalie who I will introduce again from the Caribbean she will talk to us about access to visually impaired and blind people, as she is a blind person herself. Nathalie.

NATHALIE: Yes, thank you you Richard. Thank you for having me on this programme. I feel honoured to be part of this whole exercise. As I said I will just share with you briefly some of the issues that affect blind people and people with low vision. One of the major ones has to do with written communication, because blind people in particular depend on sighted people to read for them most of the time, but thankfully with the introduction and invention of modern technology this have, there are changes taking place. And we can go way back for almost 200 years ago when Braille was invented by Mr Louis Braille and that was in 1824, and this is a form of communication used by blind persons for as I said for very long time. It is embossed through cells and raised up appear, which enables the blind person to read the manuscript passing their fingers gently across whatever is available. There's also what we call the magnifying and eye glasses which low vision people use, and this enables them to see and read the letters so that too has been very useful for persons with visual impairment and especially those with low vision as I say. But in recent times, I think in the last 20th century and even most recently the 21st century, we have the introduction of screen readers which have become very popular with screen readers which have become very popular with blind people, they have quite a few of them but I will just mention a few for purposes of time. We have the what they call the Jobs Access with Speech which is JAWS, which is a commercial software and I should say that's screenreaders are software applications that translate text and other images into speech. Thus allowing the blind person to hear using speakers or earphones. As I said there is the first one that has been very popular was the JAWS programme, but in recent 9 the Non‑Visual Desktop Access which is NVDA, has also been introduced. This is free and can be downloaded on your computer because the screen readers, JAWS and NVDA that is for blind people when they use the computers, they have difficulty seeing text contents or navigating with a mouse so they are able to hear and use the shortcut keystrokes to navigate and to use their computers. There is also what we now know as the apps built in on smartphones, like for instance the Apple Voiceover so this you can easily download on your Apple phone. Once you have an Apple phone you can go into the general settings and accessibility and then you just download it, and it gives you the various commands. There are many gestures you have to use that you have to flick, you have to tap, you have to you know, tap once, twice, many times, but the information is there and given to you as you navigate with your fingers. There's also the Microsoft for Windows which is a text‑to‑speech, as I said that is also available but the issue here for us as blind people is one of cost and affordability. Some of these screen readers range between US$300 and US$1,000 which of course many of us as blind people are unable to afford because of our economic situation. But the fact is that persons who our blind or blind persons know cannot be left behind and no longer left behind in terms of accessing the modern technology and that helps us to become very independent, and we see more and more new things being developed, new apps being created which will eventually ease the challenges that we as blind people experience in terms of making use of assistive technology and doing that efficiently.

RICHARD: Thank you, now will you tell us about the Marrakesh Treaty? As I put the slide up about it.

NATHALIE: Ok the Marrakesh Treaty too is also very, very important for persons who are blind and persons with print disabilities. This was a Treaty that was adopted in 2013 in Marrakesh, Morocco. It's a treaty that provides persons who are blind with the opportunity to read. Because of copyright laws that existed in almost all countries around the world blind people had difficulty accessing published materials and producing them into usable formats, but now that has since been alleviated, so to speak, with the treaty being introduced or adopted and the thing is that for you to access these books, and of course you can also produce them into usable formats like Braille and audio books or you are able to listen and access whatever books that you need as a blind person, but the thing is that the laws in all the countries have to be either amended or abolished so that persons who are blind will be able to get access to whatever books that they want for communication, for study, for enjoyment. So slowly we can see that things are being improved, changes are being made and that blind persons can and do have access to most of the reading material that sighted people don't have and enjoy. So this for us, is a plus.

RICHARD: Thank you Nathalie, we'll hear from you later on. Now I am going to say a little bit about access for deaf people, and deafened people. Obviously deaf people are people who are born deaf, have acquired no language whereas a large, much larger group of people become deaf during their lifetimes. Had language but then find it difficult to hear people, so have hearing‑aids and so on. Where that gets difficult, they then have to have people who are putting textual solutions to them. But there are big changes happening, for instance, Google Sign is now able to on computer copy the hand movements of a sign interpreter and translate them into language. This will mean that an awful lot of deaf young people who don't actually know how to learn to sign, will still be able to get access from signers. This will really open things up a lot. Here we have Dickson who is on our Executive to tell us more about this, in terms of the Deaf Community, which he will sign to us and it will be spoken us.

     [*video playing.*]

GEMMA: Richard please can you turn it up.

RICHARD: I'm not sure I can. [*video playing*]

DICKSON: Hello everyone, my name is Dickson Mveyange, I am from Tanzania. I am a Board member of CDPF. This is the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, which brings different Disabled People's Organisation from the Commonwealth countries. I am going to talk about sign language, sign language is quite important for deaf people to access human rights. And I would like to urge all the deaf people in the Commonwealth countries to join CDPF, and why I am talking this is because CDPF brings all categories of diability to together. We have the deaf people there, we have the blind there, we have the wheelchair users and that means the physical. We have the albinos there, but also we have the mentally disabled persons. We have youth with a disability, we have women with a disability,and we all work together. We work together to advocate for the rights. We have women with disabilities, and we all work together. We work together to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. And we have UNCRPD, UNCRPD is an important document, it's a tool because it has been approved by UN, and it talks about how the rights of different groups of people have t be accessed and that deaf people have a specific accompanying or articles within the UNCRPD which promotes the rights for use of sign language for the deaf people. Deaf people have rights to evolve themselves in political social and economic matters, using sign language or using sign language interpreters. So with sign language it's important and also it's possible for the deaf people to participate and also to stand for their rights. For example during elections, deaf people can choose or be chosen. Sign language is very important. In these times where all the global people are suffering from corona, many countries have no sign languages, there are deaf people who are interpreting a lot of operation, and now it's important for the deaf people know the countries to make sure that we join hands with the CDPF so that it becomes empowered to advocate for policies, and loss that will change the world and they will have our rights who the legal frameworks deaf people for us it's important to continue working for advocate for sign language interpreters so that we can see how we access different social services, for example, in the hospitals, in the court, at the police stations and different areas within life. Let me talk a little bit of sign language education for deaf people. Sign language is important in education and if the deaf children don't have access to sign language in the schools, that means deaf people will not be able to learn. It's not possible for them to participate well in school development. So I will urge all the deaf associations in the Commonwealth to stand strong, to join hand with the CDPF so we can achieve the human rights for our deaf children women and all other groups of disabled persons. I am happy to see you all that you are joining for the Zoom meeting with the CDPF, and I am hoping that you will learn a lot a and that the time you finish you will go back to your home and train other people what you have learned. Now we have COVID been travelling everywhere so it important to share information about COVID. Thank you very much.

RICHARD: And so thank you Dickson. To get the other side of hearing impairment people we went to Steve Estey in Canada who is on our executive, this is what Steve had to say. Yeah here we go . [video playing]

STEVE: I am from Canada, I am on the Executive of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum. I am going to talk you to about accessibility and about my disability because I am a deafened person so I want to talk a little bit about that because I think it's helpful for people to understand that deafness is a kind of a multifaceted thing. There are some people who are born deaf, we call them culturally deaf because they grow up with sign language as their first language and they grow up interacting with lots of disabled people, with deaf people. But for a person like me, I was hearing until I was almost 40 years old, a few years ago, in any case, I went all though school as a hearing person. I started slowing with my hearing when I was in high school, but I went through high school without any accommodation or anything. By the time I went to undergraduate at University I was wearing a hearing‑aid. But it took, oh, 20 years to slowly lose my hearing, and in terms of people like me people who are deaf or hard‑of‑hearing, captioning here in North America, I don't know if it's common in other parts of the world although it's becoming more and more common, they call it here closed captioning for the hearing impaired. We actually have it in our movie theatres and on most television stations and so on, and it's becoming increasingly common through internet communication as well. So it really makes things a lot more accessible for me. But I need to have captions so I can read what people are saying. It's challenging because as you can tell I do speak and a lot of times people find it [inaudible] and when someone speaks and not able to hear so I can challenge them but it's something to overcome you know. In terms of meetings and in terms of interaction with people I will have captioning to participate in those meetings, and [inaudible]. So absent the main kind of accommodation, that people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and deafened use, yeah I think it's fair to say that it's becoming more and more common as time goes on to becoming more and more, more and more people are hard of hearing hard of hearing and late deafened participate in things. My own experience of travelling internationally Africa and Egypt, a lot of people who are hard of hearing they don't have access to accommodation like hearing‑aids and captioning things like that, so even if you're just hard of hearing you wind up effectively being deaf because you don't have access to the technology that helps you overcome it. As a late deafened person, I'm really very technologically dependent, and that can be somewhat expensive. In terms of applying for accommodation and disabled people organisation [inaudible] deafened people, it's important to try to budget that where possible because it's something very distinct from sign language interpreter, and a sign language interpreter for somebody like me doesn't do me much good because I don't sign. Anyway, that's a little bit about me, late deafened ok.

RICHARD: Then we go on to access from for people who have intellectual impairment, whether it's on the neurodiverse spectrum or people who have general learning difficulties, accessibility is still a key issue and remember they have equal rights as we established in Module 3. But you can't exercise those rights unless you have information. So its important that the information that is in documents is analysed for what the key points are, that people need to have and then backed up with sentences in simple plain language, often with a little reminder of a pictogram to contextualise what it's about as we see here. So this is the view of Article 9, there should be better access to public buildings, and there we see a picture of people in public building. There should be better access to information someone word processing, a sign should be in Easy Read and Braille we have pictures over those. There should be more sign language, someone is signing. There should be guidelines about how to make access to public services, there's a picture of someone taking a ramp on a book. Anyone providing services should plan for good access to disabled people, there's a group of people planning round a table, accessibility training should be given to all. That usually should be provided by experts and we are the experts, so disabled people, many hundreds and thousands of disabled people around the world have got a living from becoming access consultants. They should make sure that disabled people have access to the new technology.

    Another way of actually showing complex ideas if you hold a conference, or an event, is by getting graphic facilitation so that the key points are pulled out, rather than pages and pages of not, you have something like this which is an aide memoire, it will help you remember what has been said. So this is about the Convention. So it's showing different key things, little pictograms, about the right to access equality, between men and women, participation, health, living independently in the community, personal mobility, culture, recreation, inclusive education, involving capacities of children, justice, nothing about us without us. It summarises rather than a long document with lots and lots of text in it, this will give you the key ideas, it's a bit like mindmapping which is another technique that can be used to help people who find text rich documents a barrier to knowledge.

So, then we go on to universal design, which I think Sarah is going to tell us about universal design, if you're still there Sarah. We need to keep it quite brief I think. Sarah. Are you still with us?

SARAH: Yes I am here Richard. Yes I am.

RICHARD: Universal design then.

SARAH: I want to, ok. I am going to talk about universal design, and it means the design of products environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Shall not exclude assistive device for particular groups with disabilities that are needed according to Article 2 of the UNCRPD. I will also talk about the principles of universal design which include equitable use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. Then we have principle on flexibility of use, the design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and ‑ I am unable to see some of the because of the pictures here. Let me hide yes.

RICHARD: Simple intuitive use, easy to understand, perceptple information so again everybody can get it regardless of their sensory impairments, tolerance of recorder, so design minimises hazards and adverse consequences. Low physical effort and size space approach to use. If you give us an example for your own experience of what would be universal design.

SARAH: Ok, universal design for me means an accessible environment for all types of people, and most to persons with disabilities who are challenged because of the different types of barriers in the environment that we face. For example we have ramps for use that are not according to standard, and therefore one is unable to use them, even when they are already put in place but the standards are not according to universal design so they become very uncomfortable for persons especially with physical impairment, or wheelchair users for that matter, and even people who are blind and have to walk on those kind of ramps, find it difficult to do so because the designs are not universal. So I think here in our country we still have a long way to go to make design standardised because they are just put as fixed, a quick fix to show that there's a design when you get even to a ramp, you find the next thing is a staircase. So how does a person who has a disability or an impairment then use such designs. So I think that's the challenge we face here. Yes.

RICHARD: Thank you Sarah. Universal design is the internet, which Tim Berners‑Lee who was one of the inventors of the internet, said there would be no barriers for disabled people, but there are barriers because certain software producers had built barriers into it but with sort of thing that Nathalie was talking about, screenreaders, it should be possible for everyone to access with their assistive devices the information that is on the net. One of things we can do is make sure that websites don't have barriers built into them, have campaigns to get accessible websites, accessible environments. And just last point, instead of having a heavy door on a building, why not have it automatically opening which will benefit people with prams, blind people, wheelchair users, everybody will benefit from universal design. So maybe the need to be granted aid from government for buildings to make them more universally designed. Now Nathalie was going to tell us bit about as[? ] [inaudible] [word] being going on in Jamaica, then a bit about her home country Dominica. Nathalie.

NATHALIE: Yes thank you Richard. Ok yes with regards to catering to needs of blind people as it relates to the use of assistive technology, we know of a project that was launched by the Government of Jamaica in 2016 where they would be catering to the needs of blind persons and also those who are deaf and hard of hearing and it's been undertaken under the CariCom trade competitive project. I must say that Jamaica really has been a model and leading really in terms of catering to the needs of persons with disabilities, not only were they the first to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but they have quite a few facilities there that cater to the needs of that part of the population.

Also in Dominica we, the Government of Dominica last year launched a programme to funded by the World Bank, that is a digital economy to ensure that Dominicans in general rarely benefit from the use and have access to technology, and one of the interesting things that was said was that persons with disabilities weren't to be excluded. So what we have done as an organisation is grasp the opportunity and submitted a project to them so they we will be able to, in collaboration and conjunction with them, conduct or implement this project to ensure that not only persons who are blind and visual impaired have access but all persons with disabilities will be able to benefit from this forum and it's quite a bit of funds available.

RICHARD: Thank you.

NATHALIE: Additionally, I also want to talk about what other countries have been doing in terms of assisting blind persons to become computer literate, and in absence of Government funded support the organisations on their own have conducted several training programmes. We have success stories in Guyana, we have in Barbados, with [*name*] we have in Trinidad, Antigua. The organisation have been helping ensure that blind and visually impaired persons do acquire the skills are able to use the technology as it evolves. Yes.

RICHARD: Thank you very much Nathalie. And now Sarah you were going to talk to us a bit about this project of sign language dictionary in the Seychelles, which is over in the Indian Ocean away from Kenya and then a little bit about Kenya.

SARAH: Ok I will the case study in the Seychelles on the deaf and hearing impaired community in Seychelles has its own sign language dictionary for the first time. And dictionary was launched on Saturday after that is December 2019, Victoria the capital. When presenting the dicionary Annie from the University of Lille said it's intended to follow the local signs and does promote their dissemination. It's also a valuable tool for young deaf people to meet sign language for the first time, and a valuable tool for deaf students and their teachers.

The publication was made possible through a partnership agreement between the National Institute for the Young Deaf in Paris, the Association of People with Hearing Impairment in Seychelles and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and the University of Lille. The chairperson of the Association of People with Hearing Impairment in Seychelles, Anita Gardener said she is very happy proud of the team that worked on the project. "We had our ups and downs but we were determined to finish it. As sign language is a right, our association felt it was our duty to felt make sure that happen. Now our job is to teach the whole population." So this is a good effort for the deaf in the Seychelles, and they can also say that in Kenya, we have a dictionary, a dictionary also and we are proud to say that it has been around for over 10 years I think now, and it has been used in many schools and universities to teach sign language student, because we have [inaudible] which is like the syllabus that is accept that for people to use, even for media purposes like during the presentation of news and other media session, the Kenya sign language is what is used and the dictionary has been a very big milestone for uniting and making the language universal.

RICHARD: Thank you. We're going to move on Sarah.

SARAH: Also Kenyan sign language is ‑

RICHARD: Thank you.

SARAH: Ok, ok.

RICHARD: Thank you. Our last example is from Canada back to Steve again, who is going to tell us about how Canadian DPOs got an Act of Parliament. [video playing]

STEVE: Hi, my name is Steve Estey, and I am from Canada. I am a Canadian representative on the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum and I hold a seat that actually is meant to represent organisations of people with disabilities from so‑called 'donor countries' of the Commonwealth. So that the Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Malta. I try to carry the concerns of DPOs for most countries to the CDPF. In any case, today I want to take a moment and talk a little bit about accessibility here in Canada. Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010, and in 2016, a new Government announced an initiative to introduce accessibility legislation at a national level. As that process played out over a four‑ year period, three‑ year period I guess, between 2016 and 2019, initially what happened is the Government did consultations across the country, talking to disabled people and organisations to see what we wanted the legislation to contain. That then led to a process of the Government taking that information and bringing it internally and working with its legislative drafters to come up with draft legislation. Pardon me. While the Government was drafting that legislation, they provided resources for Canadian DPOs to consult amongst ourselves about what we wanted to the legislation to look like. So we did that over the course of about 18 months, we travelled across the country. I was working at an organisation at the time called the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and we had a cross‑section of about 15 disability organisations that we worked with, to canvas, people's opinion at a grass roots level. The Government work had primarily been in capital cities across the country and of different provinces. Our work went to smaller towns and rural parts of the country, to listen to what disabled people wanted the accessibility legislation to look like. So we did that overred course of about a year, we produced a report and by the time we produced our report the Government had come up with its initial draft legislation. The draft legislation then went to our House of Commons, through that process and after the second reading in the House, it went to a committee of Members of Parliament and at that time, DPOs presented to the Parliamentary Committee about the changes they wanted to see in the draft legislation to enhance it and improve it. We went through a process of back and forth with that over a course of about 6 months, with this Parliamentarians in both our House of Commons and our Senate. Than at the end of that period of time, there were a number of changes to the legislation that were requested by the Canadian disability community, really enhanced the strength of the legislation and in 2019 the Government of Canada actually passed our accessibility legislation called the Accessible Canada Act.

RICHARD: Ok thank you. Now we'll just come on to the last three slides which are summarising what we're doing. These are based, all these last three slides on an analysis of the UN Committee. The first 14 reports, the criticisms made of the firsts 14 Commonwealth countries that they reported on, and they said the following things. That DPOs really need to carry out a situational analysis to identify barriers to access not addressed, and lack of compliance with legislation and identify gaps in national legislation frameworks, and link that to the UNCRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals. That State Parties at all levels of Government need to audit implementation on compliance, with the legislation they have got. Many have legislation, many have accessibility standards, they are just not applying them. Which should include physical built environment, identified public private housing public transport, road, rail, air and boat, and review and amend the legislation. State Parties need to accelerate the full implementation in the area of ICT, information communication technology, including by the provision of low cost software, and assistive devices for persons with disabilities. This needs to link in with sign language captioning, Braille, and Easy Read. Then also, State Parties to implement national state law on accessibility, such as we just heard in Canada, by taking the cross sectoral approach requiring all ministry engage in a public infrastructure discussion. Now, Nathalie was going to do this one, State Parties to ensure compliance with Article 9 of the UNCRPD in national legislation, are you still with us Nathalie, do you want to press this one? Or do you want me to skip through it? I think as we're getting close on time, to our hour.

NATHALIE: You can go ahead Richard.

RICHARD: Ok thank you Nathalie, we're running out of time I think. Legally binding accessibility action plans, with benchmarks and indicator, these are the bread and butter of the disability movements to equip ourselves to be able to [inaudible], aggressively developing operational measures, the accessibility of transport systems, the information and communication technology policy, the provision of remedies is no good having legislation, if you can't challenge it in the Courts system where people are flouting it. This also needs to be when infrastructure projects are brought in by foreign investment. The Ministries need to have rules on procurement that have to fit in with the accessible legislation, and that should not exclude tax‑free areas which many countries do to entice big business into their country and then say you don't have to go by the regulations, they do and they should. Setting a timeframe and targets for implementing access to captions services, description video, this is on the mass media, all mass media broadcast media should be accessible with audio description, captioning and sign language available. Which is now very possible on digital channels to have that, and compliance with nationally recognised standards of access. So that's what the legislation needs to say, and when we are consulted about it make sure these points are in. Requiring universal design as we move forward. Now, I would like to call on Sarah to finish up our programme here. The last one of what is to be done. Sarah, are you still with us?

SARAH: Yes Richard, I am still here. What is to be done for access what is to be done, State Parties to develop effective monitoring and reporting. Then we have State Parties take meausre to ensure that the technology and services necessary for the repair and manufacturing of mobility aids, assistive devices be made available and at an affordable cost. Then we also need the State Parties to support the teaching, use and development of their national sign language for deaf people, and deaf people, blind people and ensure sufficient Sign Language Interpreters are trained and available that for those who are hard of hearing, hearing‑aid technology is widely and cheaply available for them. State Parties should also ensure teaching and information is provided accessibly to those with learning difficulty and psychosocial impairments in ways and environments that are conducive to their comprehension. Yeah.

RICHARD: That's the end of, you can say a last word to to us all.

SARAH: Yeah, I think this has been a very interesting module, and I know it is the greatest challenge or impairment that persons with disabilities have, and learning how and what to have, or use to be able to function, and be acceptable and be able to move around in the environment and to be part and parcel of the society, is a very important aspect of life of persons with disabilities. I know that the knowledge is good, and I hope we shall continue pushing and holding our Governments to make living for us accessible. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you very much.