



INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Inclusivity for Persons with Disabilities

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- Established as a merged regulator in 2000
 - Broadcasting
 - Telecommunications
 - Postal
- Strikes a balance between consumer interests and competition, stability, investment amongst others
- Activities - regulations, issues licences and monitors compliance
- Consumer protection
 - Protects the rights of vulnerable groups including, people with disabilities, under-serviced communities



Persons with Disabilities traditionally categorized by

- Lower levels of education
- Lower income levels
- Greater barriers to access
 - High device cost for accessibility features
 - Content not available in usable formats
 - Limited awareness of assistive devices
 - User pay principle applied to access assistive devices
- Disabilities treated as homogenous sets with single solutions



Our objective is clear ... to facilitate equitable affordable access



Towards addressing the Accessibility



What do we have to do?

- Mainstream ICT accessibility
- Plot the path
- Create awareness
- Have the relevant policy and regulatory frameworks in place
- Do it together
- Set clear goals
- Regular monitoring



Universal design means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Assistive devices are included.



- Based on the principle of inclusivity
- Accessibility features are part of the design
- **Always available, no extra charge use at the discretion of the consumer**
 - Reduces time to access and costs to access to access by end user
- Wider consumer appeal for accessibility features – not limited to Persons with Disabilities



- Regulatory frameworks vary depending on the jurisdictional context and may reside in licences, regulations or legislation
- Clear rules with targets
- Flexible enough to allow innovation
- Ongoing monitoring mechanisms
- Funding through Universal Service Funds are a typical source for needy consumers who may need subsidization
 - Operator offset of the subsidization of consumers
 - Direct subsidization from the Fund to the consumer



Consumers

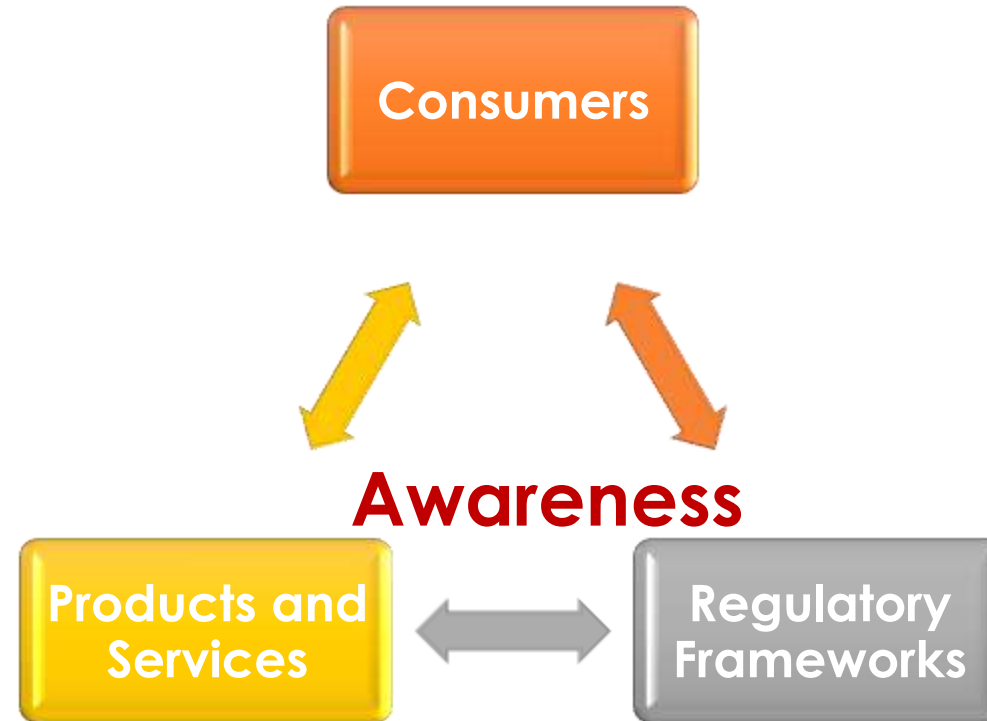
Consumer needs drive product and service development and feedback on the effectiveness

Relevant Regulatory Frameworks --

Regulator needs to develop appropriate regulatory frameworks with monitoring and awareness programmes built in

Operators – products and services

Development of products and services to address consumer needs in compliance with regulatory frameworks





- Devices are expensive and limited
- Individual jurisdictions have limited bargaining power
- The cost of compliance can be high which dictates a longer implementation horizon
- Regulators have strike a fine balance between the ideal for the consumer and a realistic obligation that can be implemented
- Many regulators may not direct oversight over manufacturers who are an essential cog





Indicator	
National Population	51.8million
Percentage of Persons with Disabilities	7.5%
Female	8.3%
Male	6.5%
Sight	+ - 3%
Hearing	
Mild	3%
Severe	1%

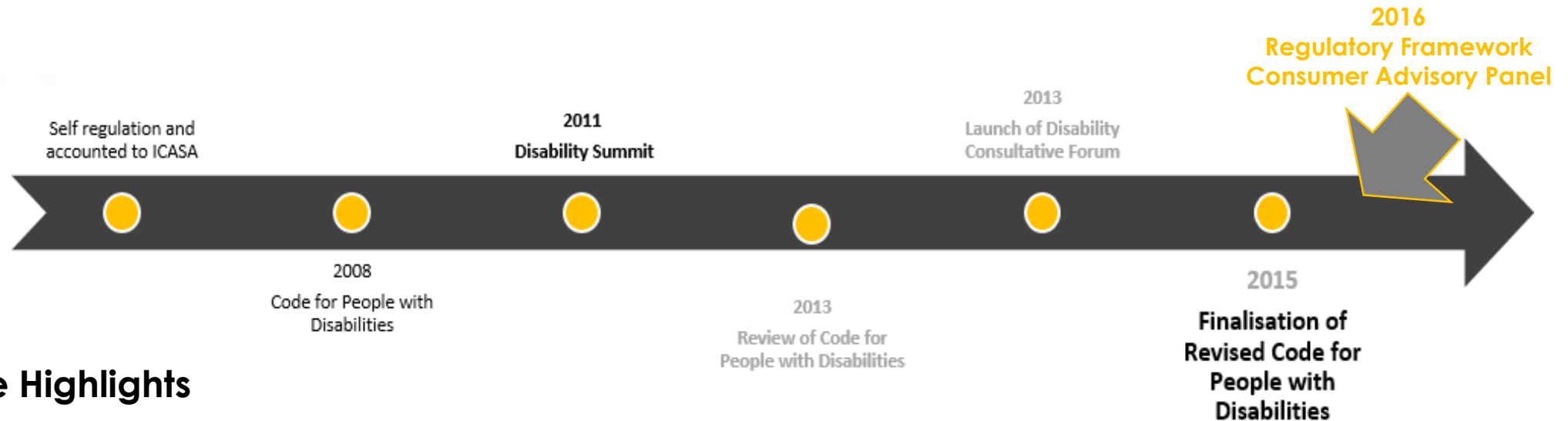
- The percentage of Persons with Disabilities increases as the population ages
- There is a greater bias towards rural areas having higher levels of disabilities
- Richer provinces have lower levels of disability than poorer provinces

Source: Statistics South Africa, Census 2011

South Africa's imposes accessibility obligations through regulations resulting all licensees have equivalent obligations.



The South African Experience



The Highlights

- Current draft regulations are based on the principle of universal design
- Includes more stringent requirements to inform consumers of products and services, including improved labelling
- More specific broadcasting targets, including the imposition of targets
- The public broadcaster recently launched the first TV with series with audio description earlier this month



Audio Visual

Content of the Regulations

- Primary focus
 - Sight, hearing
 - Local content
- Flexibility for broadcasters – choice of services to be provided for each Disability
 - Audio description, audio captioning
 - Closed-captioning, Subtitles, sign-language
- Targets
 - 10-year compliance timeframe

Challenges

- Pre-packaged international content appears to be at the mercy of the content providers – broadcasters claim to have no leverage over the inclusion of accessibility
- Inclusion of accessibility options are expensive and may be duplicative
- Limited service providers available for inclusion of accessibility options.



Electronic Communications (Telecommunications)

- Devices based on universal design at different price points allowing consumers from all economic levels access
- Effective communication / awareness on products available
- Specialized products targeting particular services

Funding

- Due to the typically low income levels of Persons with Disabilities subsidization may be necessary
 - South Africa has a Universal Service and Access Fund (USAF)
 - The spending focus has been on communities rather than individuals since inception



Take away for the way forward



- National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) need to increase its collective bargaining power through collaboration
- More devices must be based on the principle of universal design at all price points
- Better communication so that consumers are aware of products and services addressing the various disabilities
- International pre-packaged content and channels to include accessibility services



The end ... thank you!