Report from the
COPOLCO WG on the Elderly and People with Disabilities

March 1999

1. The COPOLCO Working Group on the Elderly and People with Disabilities was set up to do the following work as decided by COPOLCO resolution 5/1998.

(1) to develop an ISO/IEC document providing basic principles and considerations on how to design products and environments adapted to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.

(2) to consider the form of document that would best meet the purpose (guide, statement, etc.).

2. The working group consists of the following members.

WG Chairman   Prof. Makoto Kikuchi (JISC)
Memebers   Mrs. Annie Tricoch (AFNOR)
                 Mrs. Barbara Stellar (ANSI)
                 Mr. Jame Holmes - Siedle (BSI)
                 Mr. A. Runhaar (NNI)
                 Mrs. Jeanne Bank (SCC)
                 Mr. Jens Henriksson (SIS)
                 Mrs. Parbatee Narine-Chang (TTBS)
                 Mrs. Maureen Hersee (IEC)
                 Mr. Gordon Langman (ANEC)
                 Mrs. Sadie Homer (CI)

Secretariat   Mr. Masahiro Miyazaki (JISC)

3. The WG held its first meeting on October 19-20, 1998 in Tokyo and its second meeting on February 8-9, 1999 in Geneva.

4. The WG decided to develop the following two ISO/IEC documents:

1) Policy statement

This document presents recommendations to assist standards bodies in developing policies and strategies to include the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities in all relevant standard production and revision.

It establishes general principles for standardization work to ensure that products, services and environments are available, accessible and safe for all consumers, in particular for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

2) Guide

This Guide will establishes general principles and guidelines for Universal Design and Accessibility Design intended for technical bodies preparing national, regional and international standards for products, services and environments.

While this guide is intended primarily for use by standard writers, its principles may be used by designers, manufacturers, engineers, planners and policy makers to assist in the design, and production of products, services and environments.

5. The WG proposes the COPOLCO meeting to consider the attached draft ISO/IEC policy statement and take appropriate actions.

COPOLCO ACTION

COPOLCO is invited to
- comment on the above report,
- endorse the WG decision on the form of ISO/IEC documents, and
- consider the attached WG proposal on the ISO/IEC Policy Statement, "Addressing the Needs of the Elderly and People with Disabilities in Standardization Work" with a view to taking appropriate actions.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN STANDARDIZATION WORK

DRAFT ISO/IEC POLICY STATEMENT

1.   Introduction

It is important for the whole society that all people have access to products, services and environments. The importance of accessibility was recognized when UN member states signed the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the UN Principles for Older Persons. The situation has become more critical with the increasing percentage of elderly people in the population worldwide.

The increasing prevalence and complexity of technology in everyday life presents both opportunities and challenges. So that the elderly and people with disabilities may participate in society on equal terms, it is necessary to improve the accessibility of products, services and environments. Improved accessibility further enhances the quality of life and reduces discrimination.

The advantages of greater accessibility extend to other domains, as well. Accessible products, services and environments will be used by a larger group of people, so economies of scale can be attained. Moreover, products that meet the essential requirements of these consumers will generate an increase in world trade, as goods become more user-friendly for the entire population. This, in turn, will benefit society as a whole. An illustration of this principle can be found in the development of remote control for television set, which came out of improvements made to assist the disabled.

Including the requirements of these groups of people at the early design stage will enable producers to design and produce more products and services that more people can use at little or no extra cost.

Standardization greatly influences the design of products and services that are of interest to the consumer and can therefore play an important role in this field. Standards that take into account the needs of the elderly, and of people with disabilities, will enable products and services to be made more accessible for **ALL**.

In addition, the use of visual, auditory or tactile signals (such as raised dots, notches, sounds, pictograms or graphical symbols) should be standardized so that any one signal will

convey the same meaning to users worldwide. This concept has generated a "de-facto" standard for numerical telephone keypad orientation and a raised mark on the central 5 key, which are understood and used in the same way throughout the world.

ISO and IEC recognize the need to include the requirements of the elderly and of people with disabilities in all relevant standards production and revision work. This can clearly be achieved by following the basic principles of:

- "Universal" and "Accessible" Design;
- direct consumer representation of the elderly and people with disabilities; and
- relevant information exchange.

What is Accessible Design?

"Accessible Design" is the term used for the process of extending mass market product design to include people who, because of personal characteristics or environmental conditions, find themselves on the low end of some dimension of performance (e.g., seeing, hearing, reaching, manipulating). Accessible Design is not – or should not be – separate from standard mass market design. Rather, it is an extension or elaboration of general design principles to cover a wider range of human abilities or limitations than has traditionally been included in designing products, services and environments.

Thus Accessible Design is a subset of Universal Design. Where the term Universal Design covers the design of products for all people and encompasses all design principles, Accessible Design focuses on principles that extend the standard design process to those people with some type of performance limitation (the lower ability end range of Universal Design).

Accessible Design is a balancing act. To begin with, we must acknowledge that it is not possible to design everything so that it can be used by everyone. There will always be someone with a combination of severe physical, sensory and cognitive impairments, who will not be able to use any one specific product. However, it is equally unreasonable to rely on the existence (or development) of special designs for each major product category, to accommodate each and every one of the immense variety of disabilities and combinations of disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to envisage a combination of approaches to meet the needs of people with disabilities, ranging from the incorporation of features that will make products more widely and directly usable ("from the box") to the inclusion of features that make it easier to codify products for accessibility.

2. Policy recommendations

Standards bodies are encouraged to consider and to adopt the following recommendations in developing policies and strategies, to include the needs of the elderly and of people with disabilities in all relevant standards production and revision work.

(1) Promotion of "Universal Design" and "Accessible Design"

Standards bodies should:

- promote standardization work to ensure that products, services and environments are available, accessible and safe for all consumers, including the elderly and people with disabilities, and adopt the general concepts of 'Universal Design' and "Accessible Design" (presented in the introduction to this statement) when developing and revising standards;

- raise awareness and provide information for standards developers on the issue of accessible design;

- coordinate between the standards committees dealing with mainstream products and those with responsibility for technical aids for the elderly and people with disabilities;

- increase the availability of standards and information products in accessible formats;

- promote the standardization of specific features or adaptations, where they exist, to make products/services more accessible.

- promote to non-standards developers the benefits that can be obtained through the use of guidelines provided in documents such as the ISO/IEC guides related to the elderly and people with disabilities,

(2) Consumer representation by the elderly and people with disabilities in standardization work

It is important for standards bodies:

- to ensure the direct participation of the elderly and people with disabilities, as consumers, in the standardization process;

- to provide these representatives with the guidance and/or training they require concerning the standardization process, and to ensure that meetings and committee documents are accessible.

(3) Links between research programmes and standardization

Standards bodies should promote:

- cooperation and information exchange with research programmes on accessibility issues;

- the use in standards work of the results of existing research in :

    - technical research programmes in ergonomics – including those taking into account into the full range of abilities – of the elderly and of people with disabilities, to provide basic information for standardization in the relevant fields;

- technical research programmes related to product/service accessibility, in order to more adequately address, in standardization, the needs of elderly and disabled people.