WORKSHOP ON DRAFT CODE
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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THE TEAM

NAME	POSITION
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INTRODUCTION

MultiChoice:

- Is **grateful** for opportunity to present

- **Supports** accessibility initiatives

- Views accessibility imperatives very **seriously**

Our primary concern is that the Code should allow broadcasters **maximum flexibility to realise accessibility objectives in a meaningful, achievable way**

MULTICHOICE IS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY

Our commitment to accessibility pre-dates regulation

We:

- **Do** more, particularly as subscription broadcasting services

- **Invest** substantial time, money and resources to increase accessibility

- **Adhere** to existing Code and **report** regularly to ICASA

OUR ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES ARE STRUCTURED ON 5 PILLARS

Inclusion	Research and Development	Services	Suppliers	Staff
• We **consult** with organisations representing disabled communities to **better understand their needs**	• We are always **working on projects** to **embrace new and improved** ways of making broadcasting more accessibility **as technology develops**	• We provide a **range of accessibility mechanisms**	• Broadcasters rely on external service providers and suppliers. • Accessibility of broadcasting services **requires growth of capacity of key suppliers**	• We recognise our responsibility not only to subscribers, but also to **employees** (e.g. accessibility to our **premises**, **sensitivity training**, **leadership** programmes)

WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS

We constantly **strive to improve and increase** our accessibility initiatives, taking into account:

- **Technological development**
- **Consultation** with**,** and **feedback** from, persons with disabilities and organisations that represent them

We have focused on initiatives to improve accessibility for:

- **Visually impaired** persons
    and
- **Hearing impaired** persons

We are proud of the strides we have made in the two years since the Draft Code was last published for comment

UPDATE: STRIDES IN IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: VISUALLY IMPAIRED SERVICES

Increased programming with audio descriptive (AD) tracks from 4 to 5 channels

In 2018/2019 FY, **276 titles broadcast with AD tracks** (up from 70 titles in 2017)

On-air indicators for all content with AD tracks in development, pending rollout of 1st decoders that can support the technology

Regular **broadcast schedule** sent to interested visually impaired viewers to alert to upcoming content with AD tracks

UPDATE: STRIDES IN IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: HEARING IMPAIRED SERVICES

Partnership with Deaf SA and affected community to better understand needs

Hearing Impaired (HI) subtitles:

- All M-Net movie channels are **HI compatible**
- Most M-Net channels on DStv carry **hearing impaired (HI) subtitles**
- **Increased channels** that offer **HI subtitles** to **9**
- In 2018/2019 FY, **44 841 titles broadcast with HI subtitles**

Partnered with Sky News to offer **Voice-to-Text subtitles**: 1st in Africa

Partnered with Nickelodeon to extend HI subtitling to younger viewers: 40% of Nickelodeon programming on DStv now has HI subtitles

UPDATE: STRIDES IN IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: OTHER SERVICES

Use programming to **increase awareness** of issues confronted by people with disabilities

Information slide screened to warn subscribers with epilepsy before commencement of content containing **flashing lights that might trigger epilepsy attack**

EXPANSION OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES REQUIRES MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

We will continue to **strive to improve and increase** our accessibility services

But in order to do so, we need **maximum flexibility**

For initiatives to address needs of persons with disabilities to have a **meaningful impact**, broadcasters need:

- Freedom to **select, develop** and **implement appropriate initiatives**
- Flexibility to implement a **consultative**, **needs-based**, **practical** and **balanced** approach
- Ability to **consider and investigate solutions** in line with **developing trends** and **technological innovations**

BENEFITS OF
EXISTING CODE

The Existing Code is broad-based and flexible.

It:

- Includes **range of options** to make broadcasting services more accessible

- **Extends beyond sub-titles and sign language** to include matters such as access to programme support, different website formats, use of non-scheduled services and portrayal of disabled people in content

- **Recognises importance of consulting** organisations of and for people with disabilities

- Requires broadcasters to address needs of persons with disabilities in a **non-prescriptive** manner

- Gives broadcasters **flexibility to identify, develop and implement** ways to make their services available and accessible

- Has **allowed us the flexibility to achieve the strides** we have attained

CONCERNS ABOUT
PROPOSED DRAFT CODE

The Draft Code proposes discarding the Existing Code and replacing it with a new, rigid quota-based Code

We are concerned that the Draft Code proposes:

- **Minimum quotas**

- On **specific accessibility services**

- Which have a **substantially similar function and purpose**

The Draft Codes proposals are flawed in key respects:

- Quotas are **inherently inflexible** and **inappropriate** in fast-changing environment

- **Duplicates obligations**, with **no corresponding benefits** – e.g. Mandating sub-titling <u>and</u> closed captioning

- Substantially **increases costs**

- **Disincentivises** provision of additional accessibility services

- **Inhibits innovation** and ability to respond to needs in a meaningful way

CONCLUSION AND

WAY FORWARD

RECOMMENDED
WAY FORWARD

Much has changed since the Draft Code was last published

We recommend that ICASA research recent developments and substantially reconsider the approach in light of its research outcomes

To the extent that ICASA intends to persist with the Draft Code, the Draft Code should be amended to:

- **Remove quotas**

- **Remove duplication**

- Afford broadcasters **maximum flexibility** to implement a needs-based approach to address accessibility imperatives in a meaningful way