

18th February, 2010

Respected Dr. Manmohan Singhji,

As you are aware, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which India is one of the first Countries to sign, casts an international obligation to comply with its provisions. Article 9 of the Convention essentially says that State parties shall also take appropriate measures to promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communication technologies and systems, including the internet.

2. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has laid down Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for, inter alia, making websites accessible to persons with disabilities. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has also released, in February, 2009, "Guidelines for Indian Government Websites" which inter alia, lay down compliance with level A of WCAG 2.0, as mandatory.

3. It is, therefore, necessary that websites of all Ministries, as also of their attached and subordinate offices as well as CPSEs quickly comply with at least the mandatory level A of WCAG 2.0. Similar action also needs to be taken by State Governments.

4. This Ministry has redesigned its website and made it accessible to Persons with Disabilities on 5th January, 2010. We have also instituted the new category of National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, under which one award each will be given for the website with best accessibility features in the Government, Public Sector and Private Sector. I have addressed letters to the Union Ministers and State Chief Ministers on 31st January, 2010 requesting them to take suitable action for making the websites of all Departments and Organisations disabled friendly.

5. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment will continue its persuasion with the Union Ministries and the State Governments. However, considering your deep commitment to the empowerment of persons with disabilities and the advantage the disabled persons will get through the Websites made accessible to them, I request you to kindly consider issuing suitable instructions for putting up a mechanism to ensure compliance of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances "Guidelines for Indian Government Websites".

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Mukul Wasnik
(Mukul Wasnik)

Dr. Manmohan Singh,
Hon'ble Prime Minister,
South Block, New Delhi.