National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence

Online Consultation Accessibility Checklist

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Online Consultation Accessibility Checklist

The *National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence Online Consultation Accessibility Checklist* comprises a set of minimum accessibility standards that should be met for all consultations events and resources provided by civil-society organisations. This document, when followed, allows consultation events and resources to comply with international and national disability-related legislation and human rights commitments.

This accessibility checklist is based on the principles of universal design, whereby all events and resources must be designed in a way that are accessible to all, regardless of needs. Accessibility must not be an afterthought, rather it must be central from the outset through to the implementation of all programming to ensure every member of the community can participate fully. If resources or events are not accessible to all, regardless of disability-related needs, then they should not be shared until they are.

It is important to note that accessibility for individuals living with disabilities cannot be reduced to a checklist. However, this document seeks to be a first step towards ensuring that consultations-related to the Gender-Based Violence National Action Plan meet minimum standards of accessibility and that all disability-related needs are met. We encourage additional actions and deliberate planning by each organisation to ensure that women, girls and gender-diverse individuals living with disabilities are actively centred in the planning, consultation and feedback processes.

Pre-Event

❑ **(1) Accessibility Point of Contact:** Do you have an Accessibility Point of Contact (APC) for your event?

➤ Is the APC committed to making accessibility a focal point of your planning process?

➤ Have they read the full accessibility guidelines?

❑ **(2) Inclusionary Event Registration:** Is your event registration process fully accessible?

➤ Have you made your registration on an accessible website (i.e. Google Forms, Eventbrite)?

➤ Have you asked for accessibility needs in your event registration?

➤ Have you outlined on the registration where this information will be collected and what steps will be taken to ensure it remains confidential?

➤ Have you established a process to ensure that any accessibility needs identified through the registration are able to be implemented promptly?

❑ **(3) Accessible Resources:** Have you made every image, graphic, and document associated with your event fully accessible?

➤ Does this include planning documents so people with disabilities can partake in the planning process?

❑ **(4) Accessible Social Media:** Have you ensured that your social media on each platform accessible?

➤ Has every photo or video been captioned? Are your hashtags written in an accessible manner?

Day of Event

❑ **(5) Accessibility of Online Event Spaces:** If your event is online, have you taken every step to ensure it is accessible?

  ➤ Is there closed captioning?

  ➤ If it is identified as a need, are you prepared to offer ASL (American sign language) interpretation and LSQ (langue des signes Québécoise)?

  ➤ Will you type information about accessibility, translation, support resources and every other major rule in the chat box to ensure all understand?

  ➤ Do you have an accessibility moderator identified to attend the consultation to ensure that all accessibility needs are met during the meeting?

  ➤ Do you have a plan to send out any presentations or handouts (in an accessible format) in advance of the event?

Post Event

❑ **(6) Inclusionary Feedback:** If you are planning to send out feedback forms for your event, have you checked that the forms you will use are accessible?

  ➤ Will you use accessible forms, such as Google Feedback Forms, to solicit feedback on your event?

  ➤ Will you ensure that all photos sent out post-event have image descriptions?

* Please see below additional guidance on how to implement the accessibility checklist, along with other resources to refer to for more information*

How to Implement the Gender Based Violence National Action Plan Online Consultation Accessibility Checklist

1. Accessibility Point of Contact:

➢ **Appointing an Accessibility Point of Contact:** Appoint an Accessibility Point of Contact (APC) on the Event Working Group/Committee. The APC is responsible for ensuring the conference is as welcoming and accessible as possible for all attendees. Although this individual can be an individual living with a disability, we caution against an expectation that an individual living with a disability should always take this role.

➢ **Centring Accessibility in Event Planning:** In this role, the APC will be responsible for ensuring every part of your planning process and your event itself is accessible to scholars living with disabilities. This includes all aspects of the conference: the location, venue, online registration, presentations, meals and social events, and the event experience as a whole.

➢ **Event Point of Contact:** The APC should also act as a point of contact for any participants with questions or queries about accommodations for the event. This person's contact information should be clearly provided in the initial and subsequent advertising of events. This should include a name, email address and phone-number that is separate from the general events email. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the APC should remain as one person throughout to enhance confidentiality.

➢ **Confidentiality:** The APC serves as an advocate for attendees living with disabilities. As the main

communications channel between attendees and the event organizing committee, APCs should seek to protect the identities of attendees making accessibility requests as much as possible.

2. Inclusionary Event Registration:

➢ **Accessible & Informative Online Registration:** The online registration process should be accessible and inclusionary (i.e. Google Forms or Eventbrite).

➢ **Detailed Description of Accommodations Available:** All event descriptions should include a detailed description of the accessibility accommodations available. If there are any shortcomings in accommodations, this also must be listed publicly and made accessible on the event page.

➢ **"Just Ask":** It is imperative that prior to the event the organisers check-in regarding accessibility needs. This requires an _accessibility message_ in the event description and registration. Additionally, each event registration should have _an accommodations checklist_ question (i.e. dietary, captioning, assistive listening, etc). For examples of both of these, please refer to the [Cornell Accessible Meeting and Event Checklist](#).

➢ **Meeting Accessibility Requests:** You should also include a date by which you would prefer the accommodation-related requests to be submitted, which should be within a reasonable timeframe for most attendees to see and respond to an event. All efforts should be made to accommodate the request, or, where impossible, alternative accommodations should be discussed. Here is some suggested language: _"For all accommodation requests, please email [...] by [...]. A good-faith effort will be made to fulfill requests made after [...]._

3. Accessible Documents & Resources:

➤ **Alternative Text & Image Descriptions:** All images included in any material (i.e. advertising and materials for the event) should have a clear image description included in a screen-reader-friendly format (i.e. both in the image description and caption of the photo).

➤ **Read-able Documents & Graphics:** All documents (advertising, documents used in the event and distributed after the event), must be read-able including large print and high contrast. Clear and direct text helps a variety of readers, including those using assistive technology like screen readers and those still learning the language you are posting in. This includes the way in which pdfs are created and the colours/contrasts on graphics. You can use the Readability Test Tool to check the accessibility of your documents beforehand.

4. Accessible Social Media:

➤ **Images:** All social media images should have text that is as read-able as possible through image descriptions, colours and high contrasts. This should be included on any posts that are in Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and What's App.

➤ **Video & Podcast Captioning**: All videos should include closed captioning that should be added within the video (rather than relying on in-application additions, i.e. YouTube captioning). All podcasts should include a link to a transcript of the recording.

➤ **Hashtags**: For any social media hashtags it is recommend that capitalisation is used for each word (i.e. #NationalActionPlan #GenderBasedViolence). This is required to support those with visual impairments.

➢ **Hyperlinks:** In-text hyperlinks enable people using assistive technology to read the content in HTML. For more specifically on hyperlinks, please see this guidance by the [Bureau of Internet Accessibility](#).

5. Accessibility of Online Event Spaces:

➢ **Live Video-Captioning:** In all online events, particularly those with videos it is imperative that closed captioning is available. For certain applications closed captioning can be enabled automatically (MS Teams and Google Meets). For applications such as Zoom, it will require additional steps. You can either manually caption events or arrange automatic captioning through third-party applications, such as [Otter.ai](#). It is recommended that captions included in all online events, regardless of if this is an accessibility need that was identified.

➢ **Sign Language Interpreters:** If using sign language interpreters ASL/LSQ (American sign language or langue des signes Québécoise), ensure they are pinned as a presenter and easily seen for the duration of the event.

➢ **Important Rules/Norms in the Text Box:** If during the meeting there are any norms or rules established, it is important to also type them out and send them in the group chat box, as well as discussing them.

➢ **Accessibility Moderator:** Ensure that you identify an individual to attend the meeting to be responsible for supporting the set-up of accessibility accommodations and following up if there is a need for follow-up during the meeting.

➢ **Send Read-able Presentations and Documents in Advance:** If there will be any presentations or documents shared during the online call, they must be sent to participants in a read-able format at least 48 hours in

advance. This allows individuals with disabilities (and others) to prepare for the call.

Limit Background Music or Noises: During the online call ensure to limit background noise (with mute and no unnecessary music) to support hearing-impaired and neuro-diverse individuals.

6. Inclusionary Feedback:

➢ **Accessible Forms:** Feedback forms or emails seeking feedback on events should be accessible (i.e. read-able and inclusion of image descriptions).

➢ **Seek and Implement Accessibility Feedback:** They should also invite feedback regarding any access barriers identified, and action any points raised. This feedback should also be relayed back to staff at your organisation.

Guiding Resources Used for This Checklist

1. Cornell University. 'Accessible Meeting and Event Checklist'. Access at: https://accessibility.cornell.edu/event-planning/accessible-meeting-and-event-checklist/.

2. The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (FemNorthNet) & DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN-RAFH) of Canada. (2014). Diversity through Inclusive Practice – A Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Processes, Spaces & Events. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, FemNorthNet Project. Access at: https://dawncanada.net/ppbdp-en/diversity-through-inclusive-practice-an-evolving-t/.

3. Institut canadien de recherches sur les femmes (FemNorthNet) et Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada. (2014). Le respect de la diversity au moyen d'une pratique inclusive – Une trousse d'outils pour la création de processus, d'espaces et d'événements inclusifs. Ottawa, ON: Institut canadien de recherches sur les femmes, projet de FemNorthNet. Accès à: https://www.dawncanada.net/main/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Trousse-doutils-pour-les-pratiques-inclusifs-1.0-Accessible-Digital.pdf.

4. Municipal Government of DC. 'People First Language'. Access at: https://odr.dc.gov/page/people-first-language.

5. Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing. 'Accessible Conference Guide'. Access at: http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/.