



## Giving more to older and disabled people

by Yasuyuki Hoshikawa,  
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**R**apid ageing of populations is something that can be seen throughout the more developed world. The evidence is there on the streets, with more people using wheel chairs, walking sticks or hearing aids. The statistics confirm the trend – but in Japan it is more marked. A key figure is the time taken for people aged over 65 to double as a proportion of the population, from 10 to 20 percent. This took 76 years in France, 74 in England, 58 in Germany,

63 in Sweden and 58 in the USA. But it took only 21 years in Japan – where a quarter of our population will be over 65 in 2015. Japan is already an aged society. Our elderly – and our disabled – deserve a national commitment. But a new deal for the elderly and disabled demands an international approach.

And so, the United Nations has adopted the “International Action Plan on Ageing (1982)”, “United Nations’ Principles for Older Persons (1991)” and “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)”, and asked all member states to take account of the elderly in the design of products, residential

housing and transportation and communication. An international consensus on ageing and disability exists. Standardization has a clear role to play in providing solutions.

### Japan leads efforts at ISO

At the May 1998 Tunis COPOLCO meeting, Japan proposed the development of “International guidelines to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities” An ad hoc technical advisory group was set up with Japan as Convenor.

This is a priority subject for ISO. The May 2000, “ISO/IEC Policy Statement” on the topic identifies the need for *all* people, including the aged and disabled, to have access to the full range of products, services and living environments. This has the added virtue of expanding the overall market.

**“ISO/IEC Guide 71 provides principles to be observed when catering to *all* consumers ... this will promote better design for everybody.”**

In November 2001, ISO/IEC issued Guide 71, *Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities*. It provides principles to be observed when catering to *all* consumers, including persons with minor functional impairments. This will promote better design for everybody.

Guide 71 was adopted immediately by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN)/the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC). Korea adopted the Guide in 2002 and Japan made it a national standard, JIS Z 8071, in June 2003. Clearly, users of the Guide should

### ISO/IEC Guide 71 – Progress in Europe

by Dr Gottlobe Fabisch, ANEC  
Secretary-General

**Design for All** means that products and services should be designed and manufactured for as many consumers as possible. People tend to consider the concept as serving only a minority of people even though anyone can be disabled in one way or another at any time, as a result of a broken leg, for instance. Moreover, with age, we all have more disabilities – in sight, hearing and mobility, to name the most obvious. Eurostat statistics show that over 77 million people – 20 per cent of the population in Europe – are 60 years of age or more. Eurostat also predicts that most EU regions will see the number of older people double by 2030. Hence, there is an increasing market for products designed for all.

It is a basic consumer right to have access to safe products and services. Therefore ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardization, took an active role in contributing to the elaboration of ISO/IEC Guide 71, which is based on the concept of Design for All. In particular, we are glad that CEN and CENELEC adopted this document in 2002. From it, CEN/CENELEC Guide 6 was born, which is identical with the international guide. We hope that The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), too, will promote Guide 71.

#### Design for All requires a change of mindset

Consumer representatives, however, know that it is not sufficient to have a guidance paper or a standard to foster progress on new concepts. It is equally important to implement them, which requires a change of mindset. Therefore, in 2003 ANEC called for the implementation of CEN/CENELEC Guide 6 in our 'Design for All Policy Statement' (ANEC2003/DfA/027). The EU Com-

mission, who had launched the European Year of People with Disabilities, also in 2003, was politically very supportive.

The prompt adoption of ISO/IEC Guide 71 as CEN/CENELEC Guide 6 was triggered actually by the European Commission, with the help of European standardization Mandate 283. The European Commission can issue standardization mandates in order to ask the European standards bodies to deliver standards or other deliverables, to support EU public policy goals. Mandate 283 called for the drafting of a guidance document on how to address the needs of older and disabled people in product standards. The same mandate also asked for a mechanism to ensure that the guide is used and continuously improved. Finally the mandate requires a review of existing standards that might need to be amended in line with the guide.

It took two years to develop this mechanism, which was adopted by CEN members in December 2004 following intensive lobbying by ANEC. The implementation mechanism foresees that copies of Guide 6, accompanied by a cover letter, shall be sent to all technical committees, workgroup chair persons and secretariats. The mechanism will consist of a reference in the foreword to those standards where aspects regarding the need of older persons and persons with disabilities have been addressed. The responsibility lies with the technical bodies. It is left to their discretion whether to use a checklist or matrix for this, to show how and which of the needs have been addressed.

As to the review of existing standards, Design for All principles should be considered during the regular review of standards that takes place at least every five years. CEN is also committed to review the mechanism before the end of 2006.

#### Sustainable support for Design for All

This mechanism may not be ideal, but ANEC considers it a useful step forward and a valuable starting point, bear-

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ing in mind that the change of mindsets in technical committees requires training and time. This said, ANEC calls for sustainable support for the Design for All principles. On the one hand, we encourage consumer representatives to promote the use of Guide 6 in technical committees. On the other hand, we suggest establishing a central 'expertise and information point of contact' within CEN dedicated to Design for All issues as a means of ensuring that CEN/CENELEC Guide 6 is used by standard makers and continuously improved, for the benefit of *all* consumers. ■



recognize the needs of the elderly and disabled when developing national standards – but international coordination is needed to ensure sufficient uniformity in the design of products, services and living environments to facilitate their use, worldwide, by everybody. Constant review of the Guide is required.

### **Domestic challenge for Japan**

When it adopted Guide 71 as a national standard, JISC also published “Guidelines for standardization for all people to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities”.

**“Our elderly and our disabled deserve a national commitment. But a new deal demands an international approach.”**

These guidelines used survey results from some 200 consumer and industry organizations on themes of standardization in this area. About 40 themes were identified under six headings, for studies which are now in progress:

- Guide 71 and systematization of JIS development
- Guide 71 and development of sector guides
- Establishment of an “accessible design forum”
- Cooperation and joint development of standards among Asian countries
- Proposed standards for ISO
- Establishment of a system of meeting needs through marking systems

### **More useable household goods**

JIS S 0012 on “useability of consumer products”, JIS S 0011 on “marking tactile dots on consumer products” and JIS S 0021 on “packaging and receptacles” are three national standards aimed at making household goods more user-friendly for everyone. Those

standards are currently being examined in Japan-China-Korea projects, and are expected to be expanded to other Asian countries. Recently, two more standards – JIS S 0014 on “auditory signals on consumer products– Sound pressure levels of signals for the elderly and in noisy conditions” and JIS S 0032 on “visible signs and displays – Estimation of minimum legible size for a Japanese single character” have emerged. Application of these standards to household electrical appliances has started.

### **Information and communication**

Japan is trying to increase the *information* accessible to older persons and persons with disabilities. In May and June 2004, three Parts of JIS X 8341 were published:

- Guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities – Information and communication equipment, software and services – Common guidelines.
- Guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities – Information and communication equipment, software and services – Information processing equipment.
- Guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities – Information and communication equipment, software and services – Web content.

Development of standards for communication equipment, office machines, software and household electrical appliances is underway.

### **The lived environment**

Efforts have been made to improve the quality of life for elderly and disabled people in their living environment at large.

Four years ago, JIS T 9251 “Dimensions and patterns of raised parts of tactile ground surface indicators for blind persons” was published. It is now used in many places, including communal facilities. And we now have JIS S 0024 “Guidelines for older persons and persons with disability – Housing equipment”

## **UN convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities**

The United Nations is in the process of drafting an international human rights convention “to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, based on the holistic approach in the work done in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination”.

The General Assembly Ad Hoc Committee in charge of the convention will hold its sixth session from 1 to 12 August 2005. The General Assembly has invited intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with an interest in the matter to make contributions to the work entrusted to the Ad Hoc Committee.

During the upcoming session, several draft articles will be discussed that are critical to the successful implementation of the future convention. Among them, the draft article on accessibility stands out as having a major symbolic as well as a programmatic bearing.

ISO has been invited to provide input on relevant International Standards work relating to persons with disabilities to the Ad Hoc Committee and, to this end, submitted a report giving information on ISO’s efforts and achievements in the field, including ISO/IEC Guide 71, *Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities*.



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The lived environment now has legal protection, such as the “Barrier-free transportation law” and the “Law for promotion for older persons and persons with disabilities to use specific buildings smoothly”.

Industry now markets products that address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities. Commercial messages, catalogue sales and specialized shops have appeared. There is also a collaborative move to create new markets across industries. In October 2003, the Accessible Design Forum ([www.adf-international.jp](http://www.adf-international.jp)) was established as a platform for sharing information to help an ageing society.

The Accessible Design Forum Symposium is held annually. The 2004

Symposium was organized through the Cabinet Office and the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Communications, National Land and Transportation; Health, Labour and Welfare, and Economy, Trade and Industry – with about 500 attendees.

In October 2003, the Japan-Korea-China Accessible Design Forum Committee was established to promote standardization in this area, with its first meeting in Beijing in September 2004.

A “Liaison committee of local governments for promoting universal design” was founded in 2002 to exchange information and ideas. Local government has advanced from collection of information to development of meaningful guidelines.

The new standard – JIS T0103 (Design principles of pictorial symbols for communication support) – should make life visually easier.

### We need more data

As part of their market ages, manufacturers need scientific data quantifying the associated changes of body functions and human characteristics.

At present, some new technologies and product “improvements” actually make products harder to use. Some also jeopardize safety when people have difficulties modifying their behaviour. An ergonomic database related to body functions (such as movement, sight, and hearing) is needed. It is also important that products manufactured with improved accessibility in mind, be easily identifiable.

Finally, it is important not to impose all the inconveniences of disability on a minority of individuals, but to develop a general social environment, through rule-making, that caters for them as part of society. New ideas are needed. New ideas will help create new markets. ■

### About the author



**Yasuyuki Hoshikawa** entered the TOMY Company in 1980. At TOMY, he developed toys for children with disabilities. Thereafter, he worked within

the Japan Toy Association to cultivate efforts to develop toys not for “normal” or “disabled” children, but for everyone. In 1991, he formed an NPO, now known as the Accessible Design Foundation, to raise consciousness of accessible design and its possibilities. From 1998 through 2001, he participated as a member of the ISO/IEC Guide 71 national committee. He is currently a participant in the China-Japan-Korea accessible design effort.



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