ARSO-COCO

POLICY GUIDE ON THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

African Organisation for Standardisation- Consumer Committee (ARSO- COCO)
ARSO Central secretariat
International House, 3rd Floor Mama Ngina Street, Nairobi
Tel: (+254)-20-2224561, 311641, 311608.
Email: arso@arso-oran.org
Website: www.arso-oran.org

Research done by: Diane Nyirarukundo
MA (M&E), BA (COM. DEV)
Intern at ARSO-COCO
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1. Background

The WHO estimates that about six hundred million people live with disabilities of various types in the world, and the number is increasing due to the rise of chronic diseases, injuries, car crashes, falls, violence and other causes such as ageing of this total, 80% live in low income countries; most are poor and have limited or no access to basic services, including rehabilitation facilities. (www.who.int Oct.2006)

The needs of older persons and persons with disabilities are not being adequately addressed when other relevant standards for everyday products and services are written or revised.

African societies acknowledge disability as a phenomenon that cuts across all spheres of the society and which requires support from all sectors. Therefore it is important for the elderly and people with disability in the society have access to products, services and environments.

2. The purpose of this guide is to provide information that might help reduce the challenges faced by elderly and people with disability in African societies.

Therefore this guide:

- Will inform all consumers about the risks and challenges faced by elderly and people with disabilities in Africa.
- Give knowledge to all the consumers in relation to the purchase of elderly and people with disabilities products.
• Promote environmental protection and thus improve the quality of services

• Ensure elderly and people with disabilities have equal access to products and services

• Provide ARSO Safety standards to consumers and professionals, which specify the safety requirements, tests and test methods for the products referred to in this guide.

This guide will provide information for elderly and people with disabilities-related products, that are detailed to provide comprehensive information to assist consumers be it: elderly, people with disability, Producers and manufacturers of elderly and people with disabilities products and also help to reduce the risks that may end up causing the harm or any other accidents to them.

3. Types of products used by elderly and people with disabilities

3.1. Community equipment

It refers to a wide range of products that are primarily intended to help disabled people and older people with everyday living.

Examples; include bath seats, can openers, hoists and standing frames

The term can also include mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, scooters and walking frames. (Trace R&D.1992)

i. **Ortheses** are orthopedic products that are externally applied and offer physical support, such as braces, sole inserts and limb support.

ii. **Prostheses** can be described as replacement parts’ such as artificial limbs, hip replacements, and breast reconstruction.
iii. **Cosmeses** are designed to help preserve, restore or enhance physical appearance.

4. **The importance of accessibility of products**

The importance of accessibility was recognized when the UN member states signed the UN standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities and the UN Principles for Older Persons. The situation has become more critical with the increasing percentage of elderly people in the population worldwide. While not all older persons have disabilities, the prevalence of disability is highest among this demographic group.

The increasing prevalence and complexity of technology in everyday life presents both opportunity and challenges. So that older persons and people with disability 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.

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 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 the remote control for the television set, which come out of improvements made to assist
people with disabilities. This statement is aimed at encouraging the
development of standards that promote design that enables the use of products
and services by older persons and people with disabilities.
(Bruce, R&Douglas.2000)

5. **Standardization of products for people with disabilities**

Producers of different products used by people with disabilities must consider
and includes where possible the requirements of these groups of people at the early design stage.

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. However, this needs to be considered within the constraint that standards should normally not be designed restrictive. Older persons and people with disabilities are important user and consumer groups.

Currently in Africa their needs are not being adequately addressed when standards are made or revised. Standards that take into account the needs of these users will have much greater market relevance and help to make products and services more accessible and usable for all (ISOreport2014).

**ARSO** Consider that the standardization of product used of elderly and people with disabilities must also be applicable to visual, auditory or tactile signals (such as raised dots, notches, sounds, pictograms or graphical symbols) so that any one signal will convey the same meaning to users worldwide.

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

- Universal or Accessible Design
- consumer representation of older persons and people with disabilities; and
- Relevant information exchange

6. Accessible Design

“Accessible Design” is the term used for the process of extending mass market product design to include people because of personal characteristics or environmental conditions, of 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 separated from standard mass market design. Rather, it is an extension or elaboration of general design principles to cover a wide range of human abilities or limitations than has traditionally been included in designing products, services and environments.

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. 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. (Bruce, R&Douglas 2000)
7. What Consumers should consider when buying or prior to using:-

The below mentioned are some of the major requirements for the elderly and people with disabilities:

i. Labelling requirements
When manufacturing any product used by elderly and people with disabilities, manufacturers should ensure they have done the labeling of products and as a consumers or buyers, we should always read labels to make sure the appliance producer is mentioned and one that is familiar. This removes doubt on the consumer since the appliance will be from a credited source/producer.

ii. Instructions
They must also read the instruction given from the manufactures in order to understand the use of a product and also confirm the standards of the product.

iii. Warning signs
It is very important for the elderly and people with disabilities to read the warning sign of any product that they are buying. This will help to prevent any risks that may occur without knowing.

iv. Environmental Protection
Protecting the Environment is the key that every elderly and people with disabilities should support. Same applied in buying different product also they should check if they are Promoting environmental protection as they use different product.

8. Policy Recommendations
ARSO encourages all the African society to consider that older persons and people with disabilities have market relevance and to adopt the following
policies recommendations in developing policies and strategies, so as to address their needs in all relevant standards production and revision work. The big effort should be put in assessing the conformity of the products designed for the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.

ARSO –COCO and others partnering organization will ensure that there is:

i. **Promotion of Universal Design and Accessible Design**
   - Promote standardization work to ensure that products, services and environments are available, accessible, usable and safe for all consumers including elderly and people with disabilities.
   - Raise awareness and provide information for standards developers on the issue of Accessible Design taking into account ARSO-COCO guide on addressing the needs of elderly and people with disabilities in standards work.
   - Coordinate between the standards committees dealing with mainstream products and those with responsibility for technical aids and accessibility standards for elderly and people with disabilities.
   - To increase the availability of standards and information products.

ii. **Representation of elderly and people with disabilities in standardization work**
   - Ensure the representation of interests of elderly and people with disabilities, as consumers, in the standardization process.
• Provide these representatives with guidance and adequate training they require concerning the standardization process.

iii. **Links between research programmes and standardization**

ARSO-COCO should promote:

• Cooperation and information exchange with research programmes on accessibility issues.

• The use in standardization work of the results of existing research in: technical research programmes related to product and service accessibility.

It is therefore to note that by creating awareness among the consumers and ensuring the representation of interests of elderly and people with disabilities, as consumers in the standardization process, will empower all the consumers to have enough information about their desired product and they will promote the quality product in the society and in Africa and people with disabilities and elderly will be taken care off in the society and they will be able to access their product.
Standardized Portable Folding Electric Wheelchair that meet the needs for the Elderly and Disabled People which helps them to perform different activities in the house.
9. Conclusion

It is therefore to note that by creating awareness among the consumers and ensuring the representation of interests of elderly and people with disabilities, as consumers in the standardization process.

Quality product for elderly and people with disabilities must be available to this people in order to perform different activities. It is important to support those in such condition in our society and get them involved in the social events and educate them more about products and standards.

10. Bibliography

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- *A policy statement, developed by the Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO),* was approved by the ISO and IEC Councils in May and June 2000 respectively.

- Internet source: http://www.needs of elderly-people with disality.net.