Summary Report of Vodacom's

Inaugural Accessibility Conference







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Theme:

"Promoting the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities in Africa; leaving no one behind."



Agenda



	Time	Topic/Item	Activities	Speaker/Participant
		· ·		
	08:00 – 09:30	In-person event registration	Registration	Events team
4	09:30 – 09:35	Video	Video	Events team
Purpose in Action – Enabling an inclusive digital society	09:35 – 09:40	Welcome	Welcome	Dr Karen Smit: Accessibility Lead – Vodacom Group
	09:40 - 09:45	Introduction	Vodacom SA CEO address	Sitho Mdlalose: CEO Vodacom South Africa
	09:45 – 10:00	Driving accessible innovations to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in a digital economy.	Keynote talk	Dr Shameel Joosub: CEO Vodacom Group
	10:00 – 10:55	Removing barriers to accessibility/ disability inclusion: the role of Policies in influencing an inclusive ICT landscape.	Panel discussion Moderator: Taki Netshitenzhe: Chief Officer – External Affairs Vodacom South Africa	 (former) Minister Lindiwe Zulu: Minister of Social Development – South Africa Shuaib Chalklen: Executive Director – African Disability Forum Mariana Gomes Neto: Human Rights Officer – Office of the United Nations High Commissione for Human Rights Mpho Moyo: Research Associate – Research ICT Africa Petronella Linders: Chief Director: Gender, Disability, Youth and Children: Department of Communications and Digital Technologies – South Africa
	10:55 – 11:05	Q&A		
2	11:30 – 11:50 11:50 – 12:40	Building Inclusively, Building Accessibly: Google's approach to Accessibility.	Panel discussion	Christopher Patnoe: Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion: Google EMEA Table Kloko: Chapter Lead, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Safaricom PLC – Kenya Parada Number Patrick (SEC) Volderer PRE
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Conference overview

The Vodacom Inaugural Accessibility Conference was the first of its kind to be hosted by an Mobile Network Operator (MNO) in Africa.

The objective of the conference was raising awareness of advancing the inclusion of consumers and employees with disabilities to enhance their participation in society.

Key stakeholders included Vodacom staff across African markets and external stakeholders from various organisations.

The theme of the conference was 'Promoting the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities in Africa; leaving no one behind.'

The Vodacom Accessibility Conference was the latest milestone in a series of discussions. It aimed to elevate the narrative of intentionally advancing the participation of persons with disabilities as employees and consumers. The series commenced with Vodacom delivering a keynote talk on promoting the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities in Africa at the 2023 GSMA Mobile World Conference (MWC) in Kigali.

The conference was organised by Vodacom staff with various (visible and invisible) disabilities as we live the principle of 'Nothing About Us Without Us – thanks to senior leadership's support to lead the disability agenda within Vodacom.

Venue: Vodacom World, South Africa

Sign Language Interpreters

Delegates

Delegates In person: 140



Media houses

Exhibitions Industry

Samsung Honor Apple Oppo

Vodacom internal Vodacom Africa Accessibility Forum Vodacom Disability Employee Forum Speakers
Internal
13
External

10

Participating organisations
Academics
ICT industry
Civil society
Organisations for Persons
with Disabilities
Government departments



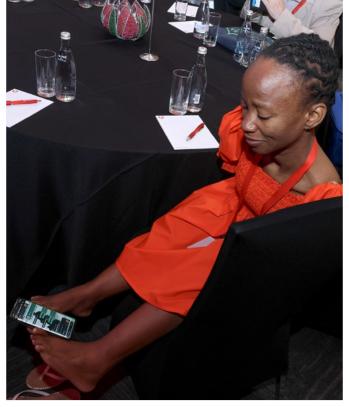




Outcomes

Enhanced the accessibility narrative by discussing **Vodacom's accessible products and services for consumers with disabilities** which demonstrated the role that Vodacom play as a mobile network operator to promote digital inclusion in Africa.

Vodacom **senior leadership's participation** and commitment to
the inaugural conference demonstrated
commitment to promoting the inclusion
of employees and consumers with
disabilities in Africa.



Created a **platform for disability advocates** from Organisations for Persons with Disabilities to make their voices heard by sharing information about disability initiatives.

Increased thought leadership amongst private and public organisations in Africa to intentionally embed accessibility and disability inclusion in their strategies.



Facilitated **networking opportunities for attendees** from Organisations for Persons with Disabilities, tech companies, industry organisations and government.

Recognised:

Vodacom employees and leaders for championing accessibility and disability initiatives within their respective business units.

Organisations for Persons with Disabilities for **driving accessibility initiatives**.



Outcomes

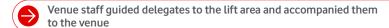
We succeeded in hosting a conference that was accessible and inclusive for delegates with disabilities and others which resulted in positive experiences and great enjoyment.

The needs of delegates with disabilities were taken into account to ensure that every aspect of the event is accessible – some of the accessibility efforts included the following:











Catering staff were briefed beforehand and offered assistance to delegates by assisting to dish up and carry their food to the dedicated lunch area

The stage had a ramp at the correct incline for safe access

Ramp Assistants' ensured that speakers with disabilities navigated the ramp safely

Speakers read any information displayed on the screen to not exclude persons with visual impairments

Visually impaired persons with guide dogs were welcomed; bowls of water was provided as well as a demarcated area for the guide dogs to relieve themselves.

Setting up the TV screen for Sign language speakers and their interpreters to be able to view the complete panel

Spaced tables to ensure that delegates using mobility aids and guide dogs could navigate the venue easily

Committed to including persons with disabilities, with a special focus on girls and women with disabilities in various programmes to promote digital inclusion.

Confirmed the ongoing development of policies which encourages accessible and psychological safe workplace environments across African markets for employees with disabilities to thrive, develop and advance.

Invited persons with disabilities to provide feedback on improving digital solutions for Vodacom to continue making meaningful differences in the lives of Africans with disabilities.

Participating and attending organisations

Organisations for persons with disabilities















Civil society organisations









Industry organisations





HONOR



oppo

SAMSUNG











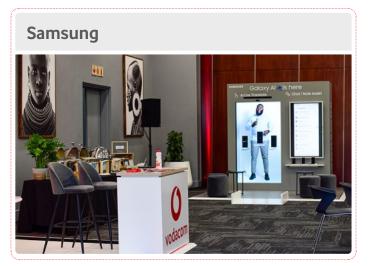


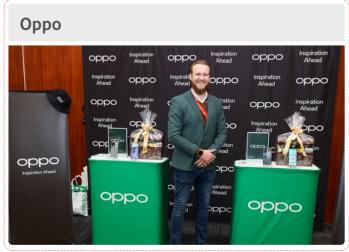


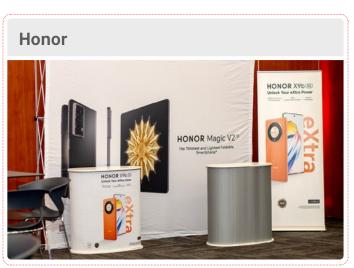


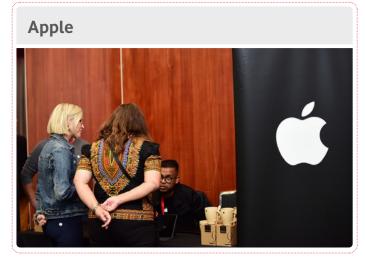


Stands/exhibitions



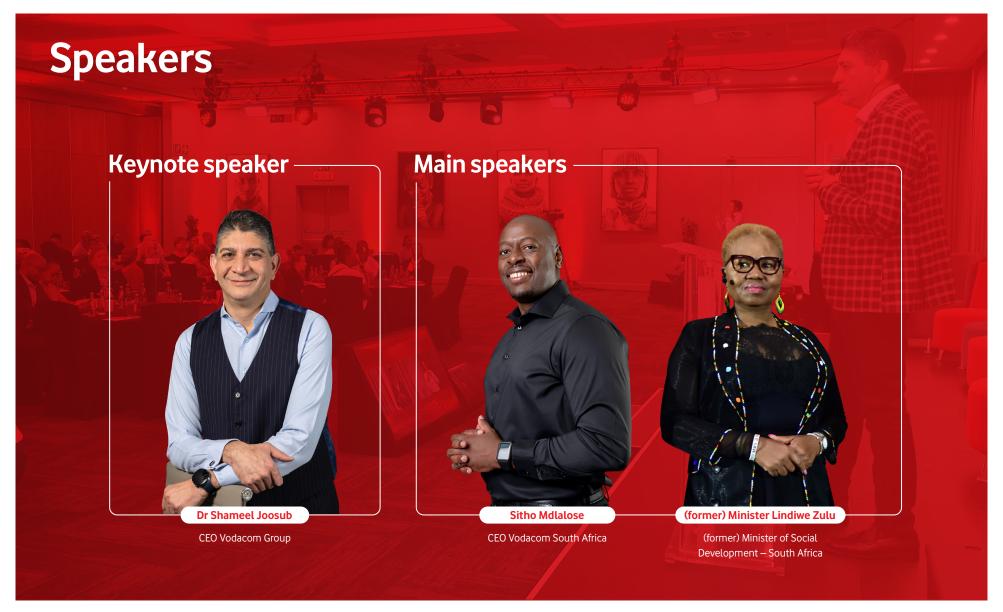












Featured speakers

External stakeholders



Christopher Patnoe

Head of Accessibility &
Disability Inclusion –
Google EMEA



Human Rights Officer – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mariana Gomes Neto



Mpho Moyo

Research Associate

- Research ICT Africa



Petronella Linders

Chief Director Gender,
Disability, Youth and Children

Department of
Communications and Digital
Technologies South Africa



Phuti Mabelebele
Chief Director of Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities – South Africa (Presidency)



Jace Nair
CEO – Blind SA



Content Development
Manager – National Institute
for the Deaf

Dirkie Ebersohn



Lynette VictorChief Sign Language Centre
Officer – National Institute for
the Deaf



Description CEO – Cape Town Society for the Blind



Shuaib Chalklen

Executive Director —

African Disability Forum



Featured speakers

Vodacom internal



Pamela Ilunga **Deputy CEO** – Vodacom DRC



Stephen Chege Chief Officer – External Affairs Vodacom Group



Matimba Mbungela Chief Officer - Human Resources Vodacom Group



Taki Netshitenzhe Chief Officer – External Affairs South Africa and Sponsor for Disability Employee Forum South Africa



Davide Tacchino Managing Executive - Terminals South Africa



Dr Karen Smit Accessibility Lead – Vodacom Group and Chairperson Vodacom Africa Accessibility Forum



Senior Manager – Talent Management, DE&I and Leadership Development Vodafone Egypt

Yasmine Tarek-Desouky



Doreen Kissoky EHOD – Customer Operations Tanzania and Deputy Chairperson Vodacom Africa Accessibility Forum



Tabie Kioko Chapter Lead – Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Safaricom PLC Kenya



Ilze Fourie Specialist – Tobi and Chairperson Disability **Employee Forum** Vodacom South Africa

Panel discussion sessions



Topic

Implementing accessibility upfront to drive positive customer experiences for consumers with disabilities in Africa.

Topic

Removing barriers to accessibility/ disability inclusion: the role of Policies in influencing an inclusive ICT landscape.

Session 1



Topic

Promoting accessibility: the gateway to unlocking the participation of persons with disabilities in a digital society



Stakeholder feedback ...

"I want to congratulate Vodacom for hosting this event and for being inclusive as far products and services for customers with various impairments are concerned."

"From arrival to end the arrangements were suburb - full stars for making participants feel welcome and important; it felt glamorous and that the "issue" of accessibility at hand is of great importance to Vodacom."



"These days in-persons conferences are rare. A big advantage of such events is the ability to connect and network with industry peers. I didn't know any person but through interacting with people on my table and during lunch I left with several new connections. This was a value add to the experience."

"The atmosphere in the venue was one of sheer joy and happiness; people wanted to be there to participate and obtain information about accessible technology."

"I appreciated the principle of 'Nothing About Us Without Us', since most speakers spoke from first-hand experience."

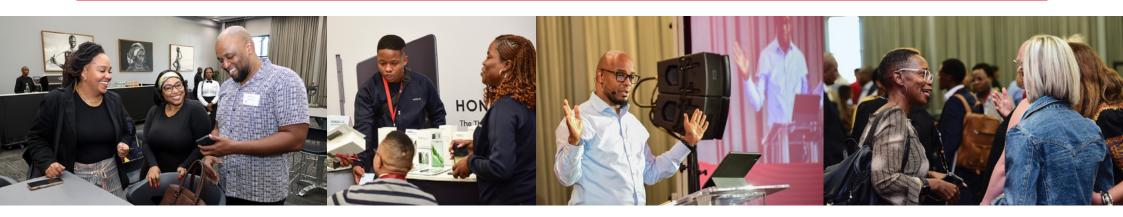


"The production, lighting, sound & camera team adapted quickly to include my needs as Deaf Speaker using Sign Language. I could see the panellists on a TV screen in front of our panel which enabled me to see everywhere in real-time. The picture-in-picture were equally big enough to see the speakers and the sign language interpreter at the same time - very impressive!"

"Topics were relevant as it highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnerships to promote accessibility and inclusion in ensuring that persons with disabilities can access technology and use it optimally. "

"The day was full of excellent content, and our delegation benefited from the networking opportunities too."

Press releases





Vodacom Group: Vodacom to hold its inaugural disability and accessibility conference	https://www.vodacom.com/news-article.php?articleID=14024
Eyewitness News: 'How do we go back to basics?' asks Minister Zulu on helping people with disabilities:	https://www.ewn.co.za/2024/05/03/how-do-we-go-back-to-basics-asks-minister-zulu-on-helping-people-with-disabilities
Eyewitness News: 30 years into SA's democracy, the vibrancy of the disability sector has waned, says official:	https://www.ewn.co.za/2024/05/03/30-years-into-sas-democracy-the-vibrancy-of-the-disability-sector-has-waned-says-official
Digital Street: Vodacom to hold its inaugural disability and accessibility conference:	https://www.digitalstreetsa.com/vodacom-to-hold-its-inaugural-disability-and-accessibility-conference/
Lifestyle and Tech: Vodacom to hold its inaugural disability and accessibility conference:	https://lifestyleandtech.co.za/company-news/article/2024-05-01/vodacom-to-hold-its-inaugural-disability-and-accessibility-conference
Midrand Reporter: Vodacom holds its first disability and accessibility conference:	https://www.citizen.co.za/midrand-reporter/news-headlines/2024/05/23/vodacoms-first-disability-and-accessibility-conference-pioneers-digital-inclusion/
Full View: Vodacom to hold its inaugural disability and accessibility conference.:	https://fullview.co.za/business/item/36883-vodacom-to-hold-its-inaugural-disability-and-accessibility-conference
IT News Africa: Can Al Transform Accessibility for Those with Disabilities?:	https://www.itnewsafrica.com/2024/06/q-a/
Telecompaper: Vodacom Group hosts inaugural disability and accessibility conference:	https://www.telecompaper.com/news/vodacom-group-hosts-inaugural-disability-and-accessibility-conference1499159



Acknowledgements

Vodacom proudly hosted the Inaugural Accessibility Conference which was the first of its kind to be hosted by an MNO in Africa.

Thank you, Vodacom senior leadership, for supporting the conference:

- Dr Shameel Joosub CEO Vodacom Group
- Pamela Ilunga Deputy CEO Vodacom DRC
- Sitho Mdlalose CEO Vodacom South Africa
- Philip Besiimire CEO Vodacom Tanzania
- Mohale Ralebitso CEO Vodacom Lesotho
- Stephen Chege Chief Officer External Affairs Vodacom Group
- Matimba Mbungela Chief Officer Human Resources Vodacom Group
- Taki Netshitenzhe Chief Officer External Affairs Vodacom South Africa
- Davide Tacchino Managing Executive Terminals Vodacom South Africa

"We want to extend a special thank you to the many speakers and delegates from organisations for persons with disabilities, industry, civil society and government departments who came to Vodacom World to share expertise and insights on accessibility and disability inclusion topics."





