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Al Maktoum Global Initiatives

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Policy Council Paper

Session no 14
November 2019

مجلس السياسات
POLICY COUNCIL



INCLUSIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC POLICY DIRECTIONS

Dubai and the race to become the world's most
accessible and inclusive city

Inclusive Urban Development: Strategic Policy Directions

“Dubai and the race to become the world’s most
accessible and inclusive city”

About The Council

Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government took the initiative to launch the Policy Council, a round table dialogue program, to promote meaningful dialogues that will enrich shared knowledge within government entities. The Council also aims to highlight vital public topics and policies of high priority within the framework of the renown achievements realized by government entities in the UAE in various fields, positioning them locally, regionally, and globally as leaders within their specializations.

Additionally, the Council strives to encourage the dissemination of expertise, promote knowledge sharing, and ensure that all government entities benefit from the same. In this context, the School aims for participant diversity at every session, so as to include federal and local levels, central authorities, and specialized authorities, in addition to promoting the engagement of influential non-government stakeholders in relevant discussions. This will enable meaningful, comprehensive dialogues and the ability to tackle topics from a variety of perspectives, as the School seeks to restructure the Policy Council with a view to integrating it within comprehensive action agendas that will enable the Council to conduct in depth discussions of topics on the table. This, in turn, will enhance common understanding and knowledge-sharing efforts. The objectives of the Council can be summarized in providing a platform for cognitive dialogue among experts, specialists and stakeholders involved in the government sector with a view to highlighting issues of priority and importance on government and community levels. The Council also aims to document and disseminate dialogue in a balanced, comprehensive and practical manner to enrich cognitive content within government. Additionally, the Council strives to encourage individual and organizational communication and relationships, and to strengthen the cognitive network within government to enhance effective organizational cooperation. Finally, the Council strives to present insights and recommendations that will have an effective impact on joint action and the development of government performance.

Executive Summary

The story of Dubai, as with any living city, continues to be written day by day. Equity, justice, and access in the rapidly urbanizing city-state of Dubai shape the story of disability in Dubai, starting with the founding of the first specialized school for children with disabilities in the 1980's through 2014 when the city's legal, institutional, physical, and social reforms led to the passage of Dubai Law No. 2 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the launch of the Dubai Disability Strategy one year later.

Dubai serves as an ideal case study in understanding the public response to developing and implementing mainstream disability rights programs and policies. This is not because Dubai is a typical case, but because it counters dominant thinking in the areas of innovation, governance, inclusion and urbanization. Urbanization provides opportunities for social inclusion, equitable access to services and livelihoods, and engaging and mobilizing vulnerable populations at risk of exclusion, particularly for the 25% of global population experiencing daily barriers to their meaningful participation in cities.

This MBRSG Policy Council brought together key relevant partners to discuss the current status of inclusion in Dubai and the UAE, and the ways to advance Dubai as an inclusive city. The discussion was guided by international and local principles of inclusion and addressed challenges and opportunities in different government sectors at the local and federal levels.

Purpose

The aim of the Policy Council was to showcase global efforts to combat social exclusion and marginalization, and discuss how innovation and universal design projects in cities like Dubai are creating a new paradigm in inclusive urban development. Participants discussed ways to develop inclusive transformation plans that align with the Sustainable Development Goals, such as access and inclusion audits, and provide a methodology to ensure that physical and digital infrastructure, transportation, and public services in health, education and social spheres are inclusive and accessible to all. The discussion was guided by the following questions:

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| 1 How can we build non-discriminatory, accessible and inclusive cities? | 2 Whose responsibility is it to ensure regulatory frameworks are and accessible urban environments leave no one behind? | 3 What role does technology, specifically innovation ecosystems like accelerators and incubators have in mainstreaming, measuring, or furthering inclusive public policies and programs? |
| 4 How can we meaningfully engage people of determination as rights holders, to benefit from and contribute to the implementation of sustainable development goals? | 5 What can the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society do to enable and measure inclusive urban development across three key aspects of society: Markets, Services, and Spaces? | 6 How can local and regional governments develop an effective baseline to measure inclusion? |

Background and Rationale

Over the next 35 years, cities will shape virtually every aspect of global development, including the manner in which fundamental human rights are achieved and implemented. Social exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization pose significant difficulties for persons with disabilities in claiming rights, having equal access to opportunities in urban areas, and building inclusive cities. Therefore, fostering cities and societies for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality is becoming an increasing priority and is key for a truly inclusive and sustainable future for all.

The global community has embarked on a bold and transformative journey to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient development path towards 2030. The roadmap is steered by a universal Agenda of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets demonstrating the scale and ambition, collectively pledging that no one will be left behind. Dubai, as an iconic and dynamic global city, has made concerted efforts to align its strategic objectives with the global agenda. In fact, the leadership in Dubai has a shared vision and commitment to ensure that Dubai is transformed into a disability-friendly city by 2020, as outlined in the My Community – A City for Everyone initiative. In order to provide a clear roadmap for the My Community initiative and the Dubai Law No. 2 in 2014 for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Dubai, persons with disabilities and their allies, along with stakeholders, local and global experts, developed the comprehensive Dubai Disability Strategy. The city of Dubai has made concerted efforts and has achieved tremendous successes to implement the Dubai Disability Strategy aligned with the global agenda on the one hand (SDGs and CRPD) and the city planning agenda on the other by becoming an integrated part of the larger Dubai Plan's programmatic and policy choices, organizational values and working practices, and monitoring framework.

To operationalize the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle, local and regional governments, such as the government of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, should structure their policies

around inclusive human rights instruments and development plans to include the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and the WHO Age Friendly Cities and Communities frameworks. In addition to these frameworks, the government of Dubai, in line with the Dubai Disability Strategy, has clear objectives around six essential PILLARS for inclusion; namely:

01

Non-discrimination:

Calls attention to the principle of Leave No One Behind. Truly inclusive urban policy priorities mainstream equitable, affordable and safe access to physical, social and digital infrastructure across all urban planning objectives and programs to ensure the right to the city in all environments, services, and markets regardless of gender, age, disability and recognizes that all persons have a right to accessible and inclusive urban spaces, markets and services.

02

Participation:

Local governments must prioritize and guarantee inclusive and accessible mechanisms and environments in which all stakeholders and beneficiaries can actively engage, particularly those who face multiple barriers limiting their participation such as persons with disabilities and older persons. Equitable participatory programs drive the development of inclusive urban and planning policies and programs, thereby ensuring socio economic equity through inclusive programs in education, health, hiring practices and legal, decent and productive employment.

03

Accessibility:

Implementation of urban strategies and policies that mainstream disability should prioritize accessibility as a measurable mechanism to guarantee participation and non-discriminatory spaces, markets and services.

Prioritizing accessibility means as a first step addressing and the eliminating of barriers in the physical, digital and social environment of cities; a second measure will be the adjustments so that all persons are able to access the tools and information needed to understand and exercise their rights in the city, including to participate in public life. This includes the provision of inclusive services and tools, to facilitate access to public facilities, spaces, information, websites and online services.

04

Inclusive urban policies and programs:

local and regional governments should (1) mainstream their public policy agenda to be disability inclusive, and (2) harmonize and localize international, regional and national standards on accessibility regulations and legislation including the International Standards Organizations (ISO) 71:2014 Guide on Accessibility, ISO 21542, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. These practices and standards provide a strong baseline of technical guidelines. Any translation of the standards should go above baseline and be done in direct consultation with accountable institutions and civil society, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons.

05

Capacity Building:

Local and regional governments should strengthen the community's ability to engage directly in efforts to improve standards and access to spaces, markets and services by promoting, developing and deploying capacity development that strengthen civil society's influence in shaping inclusive governance processes and protecting human rights in urban and territorial decision making. Part of this capacitation includes actively supporting programs and research, through collaborations with universities and non-governmental

organizations, that aim to develop and improve inclusive public policy and accessible technological mechanisms for inclusive sharing and exchanging of information, knowledge, expertise, training and mobility.

06

Data for Development:

Towards effectively informing future policies and programs and monitoring existing ones, local and regional governments should procure and utilize evidence-based and inclusive data to systemically understand and address the barriers that limit inclusion and accessibility. Inclusive data is disaggregated by sex, age, disability type, income, geographic location, and migration status along with other characteristics that are relevant to the local context. Disaggregation should take place at all dimensions of the program: when developing baselines, during the implementation and evaluation stage. Local and regional governments should promote and utilize data to inform current and future planning for the city building on a shared knowledge and best practices on areas such as universal design and age friendly cities by comparing both international and locally generated data.

Discussion Points

01

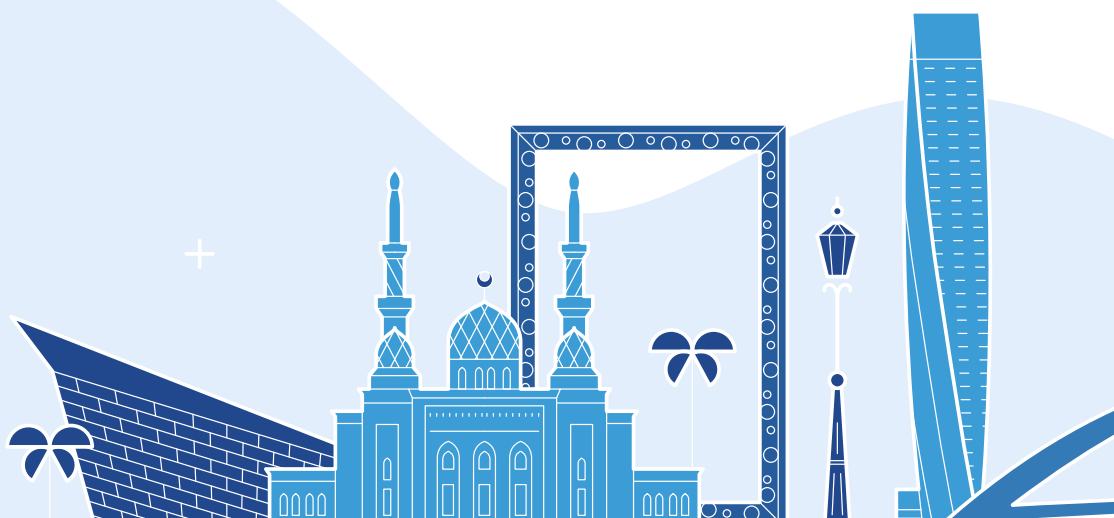
Alignment:

Alignment is key when designing strategies for inclusion. Currently, each Emirate has a different code for inclusion which creates an obstacle for alignment. Local codes should be unified on a national/federal level and should align with international codes. There is an opportunity to scale to the federal level by revising and adopting, and to benchmark a best practice model that could be used at a regional level by broadening the conversation to include other countries in the region. Coordination and alignment of efforts as well as continuous dialogue amongst government entities at a local level are also key elements in bringing forth a cohesive environment for the implementation of inclusive policies.

02

Budgeting:

Setting budgets is difficult as inclusion extends to all aspects of city design and infrastructure. In some cases, it is challenging to make changes in existent structures, as they were set before introducing inclusive strategies. The budget for making such changes can be massive. A budget code for inclusion and disability does not exist currently in the UAE. Such code could help in making relevant data available for policy makers and measurement could be made possible to assess the impact and returns of investments.



03

Engagement:

Engagement can occur on two levels: community level and city level. Engaging not only people of determination but also the community as a whole is a crucial element in the journey of building an inclusive city. There should be a systematic way to open channels for engagement and feedback from community members. On the city level, engaging in the global dialogue on inclusion will help cities share their experiences and best practices, overcome challenges, and find solutions.

04

Training and Capacity Building:

Building an inclusive city requires the collective effort from all segments of society and government entities. Therefore, policymakers, city designers, urban planners, customer service employees, educators and many more should receive disability mainstreaming training to bring disability closer to their perspectives and build their capacities to deal with inclusion principles in different fields.



Enabling Environments for Inclusive Urban Development:

Disability-Inclusive Policy Recommendations

Legislative Measures for Inclusive Environments

As priority step, local and regional governments should do an initial assessment of the current legislative measures in place at the local level to enable human rights and prioritize inclusion, universal design and accessibility for all- with a cross-sectoral and cross departmental approach to the development plans for the city. By having this legal precedence for inclusion embedded and enforced within plans for the city, local governments ensure inclusion is institutionalized and can avoid fragmentation in the execution of projects and the lack of compliance, which are not aligned with an inclusive urban development strategy.

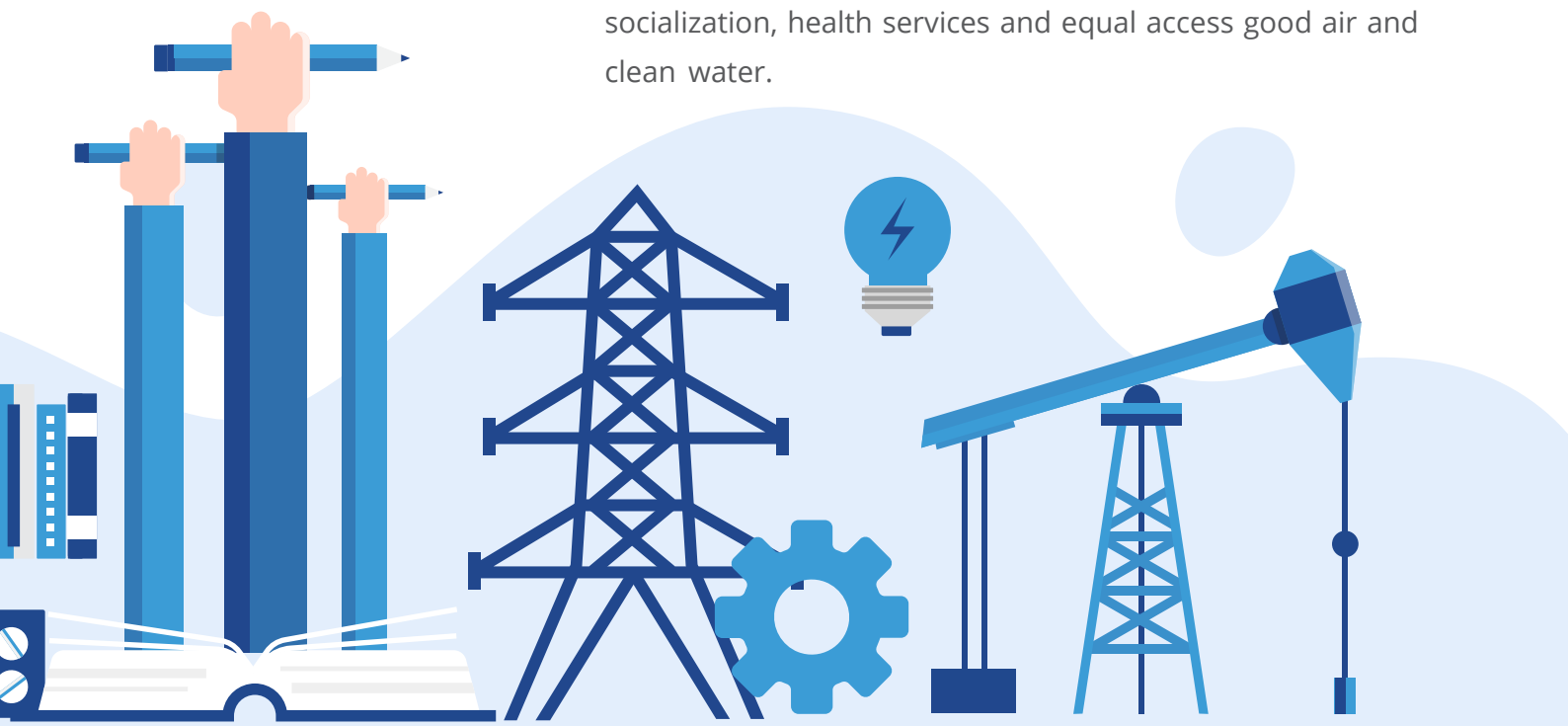


Stakeholder Mapping leading to Meaningful and Active Participation

Participatory planning and decision making with and among citizens, key government agencies, private and third sector partners should be a central engagement in developing and enabling inclusive urban policies, particularly for vulnerable communities, such as persons with disabilities and older persons. Addressing equitable participation by ensuring information is available in accessible formats, accessibility of public and private transportation, inclusive opportunities for civic, cultural, education and voluntary engagement and barrier free and enabling interior and exterior spaces, can be effective methods to ensuring all persons are able to participate in urban transformation and make productive contributions to society.

Inclusive Planning: Health, Education, Housing and more

Local and regional governments should put measures to ensure all people can live long and quality lives with the freedom/ability to select and manage the appropriate health, education, and social services most suitable to address their needs and rights to the city through inclusive and accessible spaces, services and markets. This way all people can access inclusive activities, programs and information to promote health, social, spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being, appropriate community support, housing, active leisure and socialization, health services and equal access good air and clean water.



Access, Protection, Safety, Security and Independence

Safety should be a key aspect of inclusive cities to facilitate independence along with urban policies and programs that address the social, financial, and physical security needs of vulnerable populations, and the communities and families that support them by providing accessible and affordable housing, accessible home-safety designs and products, accessible and hazard-free streets and buildings, safe roadways and signage for drivers and pedestrians, safe, accessible, and affordable public transportation, services to assist with household chores and home maintenance, supports for caregivers, accessible stores, banks and professional services, supportive neighborhoods, safety from abuse and criminal victimization, public information and appropriate training, emergency plans and disaster recovery, appropriate and accessible employment opportunities, and flexible work practices.

Leadership & Inclusive Budgeting

Local government leaders should be championing inclusion and human rights as important to their urban development goals. This commitment should also include participatory budget allocations and processes to support and finance inclusive urban planning and development. The budgetary supports in place to facilitate inclusive urban processes will affect implementation and should be shaped by collective actions and direct consultations with key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Capacity to Deliver Inclusive strategies and programs

The actual administrative and coordinating capacities of the institutions to develop and implement inclusive urban development strategies, policies, and processes across sectors should be assessed. Assessment of local government capacities to mainstream disability should look at agencies

responsible for specific areas of urban life including accessible digital and transportation systems and built environments, and inclusive services such as health, education and housing. Determining appropriate governance model/s with multi-sectoral representation, open cooperation and collaboration is critical. Success is often contingent on qualified, dedicated teams or personnel driving the inclusion agenda to ensure accessibility in each policy areas, and existing partnerships between with other stakeholders, such as organizations of persons with disabilities and older persons. Education, training, and professional development programs need to be established to focus on developing the capacity of policy makers and operators shaping the inclusive urban development agenda.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Inclusion should not only be reflected in policy, but also in the community's perspectives and beliefs regarding marginalized groups in society. In each policy area, assessing perceptions and promoting positive images of persons with disabilities and older persons can help communities better understand attitudinal, institutional, and environmental barriers currently present in urban life. Communication with the community can highlight universal design, accessibility, and inclusion as a common good, and can facilitate the co-design and delivery of mechanism/s to guarantee all groups can equally shape inclusive and equitable urbanization, promoting the human dignity of society as a whole. The Dubai Social Survey is an example of an empirically-sound measure of Dubai's social cohesion and inclusion measures.

Measurement, Monitoring & Evaluation

Local and regional governments should procure and utilize evidence-based and inclusive data to systemically understand and address the barriers that limit inclusion and accessibility as well as to monitor inclusive policies and programs. Objective, measurable, and comparable disaggregated by disability data typically measure all stages of the policy and/or program cycle - at baseline, implementation and evaluation stages. All pertinent data can be disaggregated by sex, age, disability type, income, and geographic location, among other relevant dimensions. Local and regional governments should promote and utilize data to inform current and future planning for city building based on shared knowledge and best practices in areas such as universal design and age friendly cities by comparing both international and locally generated data. These evaluative criteria can enable inclusive urban development processes and empower local governments to realize the right to the city in all environments.

Joint way forward

Cities and partners operate in different contexts and are at different stages in the realization of inclusion and accessibility. Dubai's journey, as outlined in the Dubai Disability Strategy launched in 2015, is an exemplary transformative model of inclusion. It has shaped the development of quality standards on inclusion and accessibility, underpinning the principles and mechanism of the Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities framework for local and regional governments to begin developing and aligning their urban strategies towards inclusion.

In practice, the six principles of the Compact – non-discrimination, participation, accessibility, inclusive urban policies and programs, capacity building, and data for development – can lead to tangible shifts in social equity and resilience in cities, and create universally inclusive and accessible environments that leave no one behind.

Modality and Participants

In order to address the complex and multifaceted issues related to inclusive cities, the MBRSG Policy Council brought together stakeholders and government partners to discuss relevant policy and strategy options. These include members from various government entities, academia, and industry. The Policy Council began with a short presentation of relevant research and background information. This was followed by a summation and introduction by the facilitator, after which questions were posed to attendees and discussion commenced.

Participating Entities:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Community Development Authority | Prime Minister's Office | World Enabled |
| Dubai Municipality | Road and Transport Authority | Emirates Airlines |
| Dubai Health Authority | The Executive Council | Knowledge and Human Development Authority |
| Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing | Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government | |

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The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the trustees, officers and other staff of the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) and its associated entities and initiatives.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express personal appreciation to the following individuals for their input to the different stages of producing this working paper and for providing essential input and assistance into the report and its related materials:

Engy Shibl

Ghaith Yagan

Shuaib Kunnoth

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The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government

The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (formerly Dubai School of Government) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, MBRSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in delivering its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world. The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs, including:

- Applied research in public policy and management;
- Master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- Executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- Knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.

The MBRSG Research Department focuses on the following six priority policy areas:

1. Future Government and Innovation
2. Education Policy
3. Health Policy
4. Public Leadership
5. Social Policy, Wellbeing and Happiness
6. Sustainable Development Policy

For more information on research at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, please visit:
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Social Policy, Wellbeing and Happiness

This research area is interdisciplinary in nature and focuses on some of the most pressing social policy issues in the UAE and region at large. Broadly, research in this area is concerned with social equality and cohesion, public service accessibility, inclusive policy making and the wellbeing of individuals and families. Work in this area pays special attention to women, the elderly, the disabled and those living in remote and rural areas. Current and planned research in this area includes: Women and leadership in the UAE, Social cohesion in Dubai Emirati family, Inclusive policy making and citizen engagement, Utilizing assistive technologies to aid accessibility for individuals with disabilities.



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