Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Maturity Model launch

- **This tool will become the first maturity model targeted specifically at accessibility and inclusion in Smart City programs worldwide**

San Francisco and Atlanta - Oct. 31, 2017 - On Tuesday the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict) and World Enabled announced that their Smart Cities for All (SC4A) global initiative will develop a new tool to assess and benchmark digital inclusion and ICT accessibility in smart cities. The Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Maturity Model will become the first maturity model targeted specifically at digital accessibility and inclusion in Smart City programs worldwide.

The new SC4A Maturity Model is being developed to help cities clearly evaluate their progress towards achieving ICT accessibility and digital inclusion across a broad range of functions that are important to all cities, e.g. communications, procurement, training, and standards. It will define key performance indicators and metrics that support advancing accessibility and digital inclusion. The maturity model will define 5 levels of digital inclusion and accessibility progress, or maturity, dealing with smart city technology, data, culture, and strategy.

James Thurston, Vice President of G3ict stated, "Today, on World Cities Day 2017, I am excited that we have begun to develop this new tool designed specifically for Smart Cities. It will allow cities to do accessibility and inclusion assessments that promote adaptive, iterative, and data-driven progress towards using technology to empower all citizens." He added "The United Nations has designated that the theme of World Cities Day is 'Innovative Governance and Open Cities'. We believe that our Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Maturity Model tool will help cities worldwide be both - more innovative and more open."

Danielle DuMuerer Commissioner and Chief Innovation Officer for the City of Chicago stated, "Cities like Chicago are looking to innovate and provide better digital services. The tools developed by Smart Cities for All are unique and can help cities make measurable progress on digital inclusion and digital accessibility. Having a tool like the SC4A maturity model that quantifies progress will be invaluable." The SC4A global initiative has completed workshops and focus groups in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Quito, and most recently Rio de Janeiro.

"We see here in Brazil, especially in cities such as Rio, a need for this kind of tool. We are delighted that Smart Cities for All is taking the initiative to get one developed and make it available" said Geraldo Nogueira, Undersecretary in the Mayor's Office for Persons with Disabilities, City of Rio de Janeiro. He went on to say, "It is urgent to set in place a process for digital inclusion in cities throughout Brazil, otherwise we will suffer a setback in the social inclusion of people with disabilities."

With support from the Microsoft corporation, G3ict and World Enabled have completed an extensive review of existing maturity models used for both for measuring digital accessibility programs and practices and to assess specific practices in Smart Cities programs (e.g., data management, resilience). The SC4A Digital Inclusion Maturity model will align with the IDC Smart City Maturity Model, a tool already being used globally. In addition, the Level Access corporation is supporting the development of the SC4A Digital Inclusion Maturity Model by contributing valuable insights and experience with their own Digital Accessibility Maturity Model (DAMM).

"At Microsoft, we're working every day to create accessible technologies that advance inclusion for everyone," said Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Chief Accessibility Officer at Microsoft. "Supporting the development of this maturity model aligns with our work, and we're excited about it's potential to help cities meet their inclusion goals."

"The Smart Cities initiative is a crucial step toward cities that truly embrace every citizen," added Tim Springer, CEO of Level Access. "We see access to technology as a key part of ensuring that people with disabilities can fully participate in their communities and lead more independent lives."

In the weeks ahead, the Smart Cities for All team will work with Athena ICT Ltd., a specialized consulting company focused on digital accessibility, to complete the SC4A Digital Inclusion Maturity Model that will be ready for use with cities in early 2018. The development of the model will include 3 strategies:

1. An *online survey* open to anyone with an interest in digital inclusion in smart cities will launch in November.
2. A series of *expert interviews* arranged through the extensive global partner ecosystem of the Smart Cities for All global initiative.
3. *Smart City roundtable discussions* will convene groups of experts and leaders. The first of these will be in London on November 8th. Additional discussions are scheduled for the week of November 13th at the Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC) in Barcelona.

Dr. Victor Pineda, President of World Enabled, who is also spearheading the Smart Cities for All Initiative stated, "Our Smart Cities for All global initiative adds tremendous value to the important work cities, industry and civil society groups are doing. Our project compliments these efforts by adding an equity, inclusion, and innovation dimension to the way we design cities of the future." He added that the SC4A Digital Inclusion Maturity Model will be used to "forge strong partnerships with key stakeholders and ensure cities leave anyone behind".

For more information about the maturity model see today's blog by James Thurston:

[Smart Cities want to be more inclusive. Let's help them!](#)

For more information on how to collaborate in the development of the Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Maturity Model, contact: info@smartcities4all.org.

About G3ict
The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies is an advocacy initiative launched in December 2006 by the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at UN DESA. Its mission is to support and help implement the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), promoting digital accessibility and Assistive Technologies. More information can be found at [G3ict](#)

About World Enabled
World Enabled is a global education, communications, and strategic consulting group. It supports companies and governments with the full implementation of legal mandates that promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Its work and research initiatives focus on urban planning and inclusive urban development. With its international partners, it helps build inclusive societies where people with disabilities can fully develop their talents and reach their full potential. More information can be found at [World Enabled](#)

About Smart Cities for All
In 2016, G3ict and World Enabled launched a research project to assess information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility in smart cities around the world. They surveyed more than 250 experts and smart city program managers, 60% of whom responded that smart cities were failing people with disabilities. Only 18% of respondents knew of a smart city that uses ICT accessibility standards. As a result of the findings, and with support from Microsoft, the two NGOs created the Smart Cities for All Toolkit, featuring four digital tools to help those involved in city planning to make future technology projects more inclusive. James Thurston, Vice President at G3ict and Dr. Victor Pineda, President at World Enabled, lead the Smart Cities for All initiative launched in 2016. Both James and Victor are leading accessibility experts who are committed to building a broad global coalition to ensure that persons with disabilities and older persons enjoy the advances of smart cities on an equal basis with other citizens Learn more about Smart Cities for All: http://www.smartcities4all.org/

About Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) is the leading platform and productivity company for the mobile-first, cloud-first world, and its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

About Level Access

For two decades, Level Access has provided digital accessibility compliance solutions for corporations, government agencies, and leading educational institutions. Level Access translates reams of legalese—the ADA, CVAA, ACAA, AODA, Mandate 376, Section 508—into clear and concise plans to bring each client into compliance quickly. With a comprehensive suite of products and services designed to support effective, long-term accessibility programs, Level Access helps clients integrate accessibility across the development lifecycle. Nearly half of the Accessibility Services team members at Level Access are individuals with disabilities, making them uniquely qualified to identify and develop working solutions to accessibility challenges. Level Access is also the only organization of its kind that is an advisory partner to the U.S. Access Board, Federal Communications Commission, World Wide Web Consortium, and other regulatory and standards-developing organizations. Level Access is dedicated to ensuring its solutions not only meet those regulatory standards, but also really work for people with disabilities so they can be informed, entertained, and empowered by modern technology.