



Voice of Specially Abled People statement for COSP15

Hello, respected world leaders. I'm Sparsh Shah and I'm Iris Wu.

...and we represent the Voice of Specially Abled People (or VOSAP): an NGO in **Special Consultative status with the UN ECOSOC**, working to achieve UN SDGs and Disability Inclusion Strategies. We elevate persons with disabilities (or "specially-abled people") to full social integration through assistive technology and VOSAP's digital tools. We thank VOSAP's founder, Mr. Pranav Desai, and the United Nations, for the humbling opportunity to speak with you all today.

VOSAP has **championed** technology in **several** ways.

First, we've launched the world's **first** virtual Assistive Technology Exhibition, exhibiting the products of over **20** AT companies from **4** countries. We're driving the **affordability** of assistive tech by helping innovators with subsidies, providing global market outreach for **direct** connection with specially-abled people, and working with policymakers like the National Institution for **Transforming** India, Niti Aayog.

Second, VOSAP has used technology to **directly** enable over **12,000** Specially Abled lives. Currently, anyone in India can apply online to receive subsidized assistive devices.

Third, VOSAP has created a Mobile App, through which volunteers can rate buildings for accessibility and create **crowdsourced demand** for infrastructural change. So far, we've rated nearly 20,000 facilities worldwide.

Fourth, we've launched the world's **first** Digital Art Gallery on the **theme of "Disability"**, featuring 250 artworks by artists from over 30 countries. India's Honorable Prime Minister, **Mr. Narendra Modi**, has **hailed** VOSAP's Art Gallery for its work to de-stigmatize disability and its creation of **global** exposure and opportunities for talented Specially Abled artists.

Fifth, VOSAP is spearheading Research Internships and **International Assistive Technology Hackathons** to help youth conduct data-driven disability research and create AT innovations. So far, students from over **20 universities in the U.S.** and other countries have joined these programs.

Of course, our work is far from complete. (If it was, we all wouldn't be here!). So, we invite **all of you** today - world leaders, assistive tech companies, NGOs, students, and citizens to **join hands** with VOSAP by taking your pledge to volunteer in the VOSAP Mobile App. **Please feel free** to leverage VOSAP's digital tools and initiatives, such as our Mobile App for accessibility, Digital Art Platform, AT Exhibition, and International AT Hackathons, for **your countries and communities**. In these ways and more, we all can work toward greater accessibility, inclusion, and independence for all Specially Abled people. **Thank you so much for listening.**