Poster Session

**TITLE An ‘ARATA’ for Africa? Supporting the development of a Southern African community of practice for assistive technology.**

**Aims**

International Assistive Technology Professional Associations operate in many regions to connect and support AT users, researchers, practitioners, suppliers and supporters. The WHO Global AFRO Region has extensive unmet need for AT, as well as exciting innovations and developments in appropriate and sustainable AT development and delivery. Australia’s International Assistive Technology Professional Association, ARATA, offered its structure and resources to African stakeholders who may choose to establish an African AT Association. ARATA also seeks to learn from African innovations relevant to service delivery in similar environments (rural and remote) and climactic conditions (heat, humid/arid, salt, dust).

**Outcomes**

The Global Cooperation on AT (GATE) Network supports global and regional actions to progress the Global priority research agenda to improve access to high-quality affordable assistive technology. A vision for a community of practice in assistive technology in Africa was proposed at the GREAT Summit, 2017 and further explored during the recent ISO meeting in Kenya, May 2018. A Listserv and Dropbox have been established and over thirty participants across fifteen countries are involved. Initial outcomes include the sharing of affordable and sustainable AT design, service delivery strategies and evidence-into-practice information across participants. Reciprocal exchanges based in the uniquely African concept of ‘ubuntu’ or equality of value among participants, resonate with ARATA’s philosophy of valuing equally the diversity of AT stakeholder perspectives. Interest and involvement is welcomed from all Poster viewers.