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| ITU logo | INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION  **TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION SECTOR**  STUDY PERIOD 2017-2020 | | | **TSAG-TD487** |
| **TSAG** |
| **Original: English** |
| **Question(s):** | | | N/A | Geneva, 23-27 September 2019 |
| **TD** | | | | |
| **Source:** | | | Chairman, JCA-AHF | |
| **Title:** | | | Report of the JCA-AHF meeting, Geneva, 11 June 2019 | |
| **Purpose:** | | | Information | |
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| **Keywords:** | JCA-AHF; accessibility; report; |
| **Abstract:** | This document provides the report of the JCA-AHF meeting (Geneva, 11 June 2019) |

**Action**: TSAG to take note of the JCA-AHF meeting report.

# Opening of the meeting

The JCA-AHF meeting was held at 9:30 – 12:30 and 14:30 – 17:30 on 11 June 2019, chaired by Ms Andrea Saks (USA), JCA-AHF Chairman. The JCA-AHF meeting was collocated with the Rapporteur meetings of Qs 8, 26, 28/16 (10 – 14 June 2019).

# Approval of the agenda

The Chairman introduced the draft JCA-AHF meeting agenda and document allocation as contained in JCA-AHF [Document 360R1](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc360R1-agenda.docx) . It was approved by the JCA-AHF with some changes in the order of presentations to meet the requests of certain presenters.

# Approval of the last JCA-AHF meeting report

The Chairman introduced the last JCA-AHF meeting (18 July 2018) report (JCA-AHF [Document 347](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2018/18July2018/Doc%20347_report.docx)), and the report was approved by the JCA-AHF.

# Recent ITU accessibility activities

## ITU General Secretariat

### WSIS ICT Accessibility Day at the WSIS Forum 2019

MsGitanjali SAH reported the WSIS ICT Accessibility Day at the WSIS Forum 2019, contained in JCA-AHF [Document 357](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc357.docx). This year WSIS Forum celebrated ten years since its creation, and for the first time it highlighted the ICT Accessibility Day with a set of accessibility workshop sessions. For this Accessibility Day, sign language (International Sign) interpretation was provided for the first time at WSIS Forum, and it was sponsored by The Nippon Foundation.

Ms Sah explained that the WSIS process consists of eleven WSIS action lines, and all these action lines have elements of accessibility. The Accessibility Day aimed at informing and observing how ICTs can help persons with disabilities whilst focusing on progressing towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The day focussed on five key areas of accessibility; Security, Communication, Mobility, Education and Emergency and consisted of five thematic workshops:

* Safe Listening by ITU/WHO
* Turning Rhetoric Into Reality (interactive hands-on workshop) by Royal Holloway, University of London / Inter-Islamic Network on IT
* Accessibility for Emerging Technologies by ITU
* Telecom Relay Services by ITU/ The Nippon Foundation
* Universal Design for Sustainable Development by Oslo Metropolitan University

Ms Sah reported that there has been a request from several WSIS stakeholders to continue this activity as a regular feature of the WSIS Forum, in the form of a WSIS ICT Accessibility track expanding through other days of WSIS Forum, and to form a voluntary WSIS ICT Accessibility Group (WAG) that will help build the track.

The next WSIS Forum will take place from 30th March to 3rd April 2020 in Geneva, and there will be a high level track that will take place on 31st March.

Mr Erich KOFMEL,President of Autistic Minority International, expressed his interest in having a workshop session as part of the WSIS ICT Accessibility track at WSIS Forum 2020, as 2nd April will be marked as World Autistic Awareness Day. His suggested session will focus on autism and the title of the workshop session may be “Autism, Accessibility and Artificial Intelligence: Overcoming Bias, Valuing Difference”. The session may highlight the needs of autistic people in the area of ICT accessibility that are not often taken into account. Mr Kofmel listed some examples of issues: AI assisted speakers does not take into consideration unusual speak pattern that some autistic people have; and AI security cameras may interpret the way autistic people walk as suspicious. Mr Kofmel stressed that the difference between autistic people and non-autistic people should not only be accepted but valued as an asset for companies and society as a workforce that can be innovators. (see also 6.1)

### Pilot project on audio-based navigation system at ITU

Mr Alain MUTWE from Facilities Management division, General Secretariat of ITU, presented the pilot project on audio-based navigation system at ITU (JCA-AHF [Document 361](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc361.zip)). The project is to implement an audio guide device to help the blind and visually impaired people as well as the whole public to move easily inside the ITU public spaces. For this pilot project, a product “AudioSpot” was selected. It allows users to receive automatically on their smartphone geo-personalized information based on their profile when approaching the guide points at the entrance and inside the ITU buildings. The current implementation is made in English and French, and the other official ITU languages versions are planned to be implemented. Ms Caroline AZIERE from AudioSpot also described the system remotely.

Mr Masahito KAWAMORI, ITU-T Q26/16 Rapporteur, asked how the compliance to [ITU-T F.921](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-F.921-201808-I) “Audio-based network navigation system for persons with vision impairment”was tested. The discussion concluded to plan a possible testing using ITU-T test specification [FSTP-CONF-F921 (2018)](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2018-CONF.F921) “Compliance procedure and requirements for audio-based indoor and outdoor network navigation system for persons with vision impairment”.

## ITU-R

Mr Chang RUOTING from ITU-BR presented ITU-R’s activities related to accessibility (JCA-AHF [Document 363](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc363.zip)). Studies on accessibility matters carried out by ITU-R is guided by Radio Assembly Resolution ITU-R 67 (Geneva, 2015) and this Resolution could be updated to reflect the requirements on this regard. Mr Ruoting highlighted some ITU-R documents on accessibility:

* Recommendation [ITU-R SM.1896](https://www.itu.int/rec/R-REC-SM.1896-1-201809-I/en) “Frequency ranges for global or regional harmonization of short-range devices” includes a new harmonized band for “Telecoil Replacement Systems (TRS) for the hearing impaired”.
* Recommendation [ITU-R M.1076](https://www.itu.int/rec/R-REC-M.1076/en) “Wireless communication systems for persons with impaired hearing”
* Report ITU-R BT.2207 “Accessibility to broadcasting services for persons with disabilities”
* Report ITU-R BT.2447 “Tapping into the potential of AI for Accessibility”

Mr Ruoting concluded his presentation by highlighting that ITU-R studies are contribution-driven and that members’ inputs are invited to progress its studies related to accessibility.

## ITU Regional Office for Europe

Mr Jaroslaw PONDER, Head of ITU Regional Office for Europe, introduced accessibility activities conducted within the fra​mework of the [Regional Initiative for Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Publications/Brochure%20Regional_Initiaitves_EUROPE-E.pdf) on Accessibility, Affordability and Skills Development for all to Ensure Digital Inclusion and Sustainable Development (JCA-AHF [Document 368](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc368.zip)). For capacity building, a self-paced online course on “[ICT Accessibility: The Key to Inclusive Communication](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2018/SelfPacedOnlineTraining/default.aspx)” has been developed as response to the outcomes of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2017. This course covers an introduction to ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, an overview of relevant ICT accessibility standards, regulation and policy and practical advice on the public procurement of accessible ICTs. A certificate will be issued after completing the course.

Then, Mr Ponder presented three events recently held for awareness building:

- [ITU Forum on Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2019/IF/Innovative-Digital-Solutions-for-an-Accessible-Europe-Fostering-Growth-for-Start-ups.aspx) (Forum at the Zero Project Conference), Vienna, Austria

- [ITU Workshop on Enhancing Human Life Using e-Services](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2019/eServices/Enhancing-Human-Life-Using-e-Services.aspx), Geneva, Switzerland (Jointly organized with TSB in Context of the Regional Initiatives for Europe on Digitization and Digital Inclusion)

- [ITU Workshop on the Future of Television in Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/20190607/Pages/default.aspx) (jointly organized with TSB in context of the Regional Initiative for Europe on ICT Infrastructure)

Next, Mr ponder presented [Accessible Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2018/AE/AccessibleEurope.aspx) held in Vienna, Austria, 12-14 December 2018 as a new forum for discussion on ICT accessibility in Europe. The forum was organized by ITU-BDT and European Commission (EC). The Regional Contest on Innovative Solutions is an important component of the Forum, and it encouraged innovative accessibility solutions. For the [second edition of the Accessible Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2019/AE/AccessibleEurope.aspx) (St. Julian’s, Malta, 4-6 December 2019) the Innovative Contest will be improved with the newly created evaluation committee ([open call](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Events/2019/Accessible%20Europe/190715_AccEur19_RC_Call%20for%20Evaluation%20Committee_final.pdf)).

Background materials for pillars of Accessible Europe are prepared: Standards in procurement; Artificial Intelligence; Future of accessible television; and Web accessibility. First two are already developed and the latter two are in development. Other projects at a country level is described in the JCA-AHF Document 368.

## ITU-T

### ITU-T Study Group 16 Question 26 (Q26/16) “Accessibility”

Mr Kawamori, briefly reported on Q26 activities since last year. He listed some work as below.

Newly approved ITU-T Recommendation:

* [ITU-T H.871](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-H.871-201907-P) “Safe listening guidelines for personal sound amplifiers”

Some work items progressed recently:

* [FSTP-TRS-KPI](https://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=13312) “Key performance indicators for telecommunication relay services”
* [F.ACC-AS](http://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=15036) “Framework for audio sign for persons with vision impairment”
* [FSTP-ACC-AI](http://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=15037) “Guideline on the use of AI for ICT accessibility”
* [FSTP-ACC-RemPart](http://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=14774) “Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all”
* [FSTP-ACC-AM](http://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=14773) “Guidelines for accessible meeting”
* ITU-T SG16 is also collaborating with ISO/IEC JTC1 SC35 on accessibility, developing twin texts ([H.ACC-GAD](https://www.itu.int/itu-t/workprog/wp_item.aspx?isn=14438) “Guidance on audio descriptions”; H.ACC-GVP “Guidance on the Visual presentation of audio information, including captions and subtitles”; H.ACC-GAP “Guidance on the audio presentation of text in videos, including captions, subtitles and other on-screen text”)

Q26/16 also organized workshop sessions jointly with JCA-AHF at WSIS Forum 2019: [Workshop on Accessibility for Emerging Technologies](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2019/Agenda/ViewSession/147#intro); and [Workshop on Telecom Relay Services](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2019/Agenda/ViewSession/171#intro) (see 4.2.2).

### ITU-T JCA-AHF

Ms Kaoru Mizuno from ITU-T TSB presented JCA-AHF [document 358](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc358.docx) on the report of [Workshop on Telecom Relay Services](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2019/Agenda/ViewSession/171#intro) at WSIS Accessibility Day. The workshop session was jointly organized by The Nippon Foundation and ITU-T Q26/16, and it was designed to focus on how to promote implementation of telecom relay services (TRS) worldwide. There is a need to identify specific challenges and barriers in various phases in implementing relay services, which is important especially for developing countries. International Sign interpretation and captioning services were sponsored by The Nippon Foundation.

Efforts in implementing and operating TRS in Japan, Canada, Colombia, and Egypt were presented at the session. It was understood that each country/region has different issues and challenges, and big efforts have been/being made to overcome each barrier. In each case, the empowerment of deaf community plays a big role.

It was generally agreed that further standardization work in the area of TRS would be expected to promote the services worldwide, especially for developing countries. During the discussion, it was pointed that TRS based on web-based technologies, such as WebRTC, would facilitate the initiation and the operation of TRS because of its low-cost characteristic, especially beneficial for emerging economies that don’t have enough budget. It was also suggested that ITU-T start a discussion on the development of a possible standard to specify usable levels for voice recognition.

# United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms Navleen Kaur from Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) presented JCA-AHF [Document 365](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc365.zip) on current activities of OHCHR: Persons with disabilities and accessibility. In this presentation, Ms Kaur introduced [Bridging the Gap I](https://bridgingthegap-project.eu/about-the-project/) which is a project funded by European Union (EU) and led by OHCHR. The project aims at developing tools to promote the rights, participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in line with the CRPD. The project develops tools, such as human rights indicators for the CRPD, guidelines for policymakers on the SDGs linking with CRPD, guidelines on data sources and an online database. The human rights indicators are being developed as quantitative and qualitative measures of progress in the implementation of the CRPD.

The first set of indicators, including on Article 9 of the CRPD, are available on the [OHCHR website](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/Pages/EUAndOHCHRProjectBridgingGapI.aspx) for feedback. Ms Kaur invited the JCA-AHF members to provide feedback by 25 July 2019. (JCA-AHF members discussed the collective feedback to this indicators document via mailing list and submitted to OHCHR by the deadline.)

# Discussion by Topic

## Autistic Minority International

Mr Kofmel presented “ICT Accessibility for Autistic Persons and Self-Advocacy on Online and Off” contained in JCA-AHF [Document 367](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc367.docx). There would be 70 million autistic people worldwide, 1 % of the world’s population. While autism is often an invisible condition, ICT played an important role for creating a community and for the global self-advocacy movement of autistic people, as autistic people were able to find each other only after the advent of the Internet. Autistic Minority International is the first and only autism self-advocacy organization, and aiming at combating against bias, prejudice and advance the interests of autistic people. The organization considers autism not as a disorder or disease to be prevented, cured or eradicated, but as a lifelong neurological difference. It is important to be noted that most autistic children and adults can make their own decisions that will affect themselves, if barriers are removed. Autism is a spectrum condition and the needs of autistic people vary depending on individual. Therefore accessibility needs for autistic people should not be generalized. Mr Kofmel also mentioned that accessibility measures for other disability constituencies have the potential to make ICTs less accessible for autistic people. For example, measures including descriptions for all images, GIFs and emojis, as well as posting only videos with captions led to exclude autistic people from these activities. While these measures would always be preferable to have, making them mandatory will create other accessibility barriers and exclude autistic people who frequently struggle with inertia and a lack of energy. Another example in web accessibility to autistic people is that unnecessarily busy websites need to be avoided, which is a different need from the one for persons with sensory disabilities. Accessibility should be considered, for all types of disabilities and conditions, including autistic people whose needs are not always taken into consideration.

Mr Kofmel’s presentation was appreciated by the JCA-AHF meeting participants. It was the first time for JCA-AHF to have a report focusing on autistic persons, and the report introduced a lot of insights to the meeting.

Mr Kawamori suggested that ITU-T Q26/16 would look into a possibility to address the needs of autistic persons in its work items. Possible areas may be a consideration of prevention of sensory overload, including the avoidance of strobing lights in TV, unnecessary busy websites, etc. This can be included in accessible IPTV guidelines or requirements. Mr Kofmel agreed to consult with Mr Jamie KNIGHT who would be an expert in this area from their organization. It was pointed that Mr Knight has participated in ITU events including the first Accessible Europe in Vienna in December 2018, and some of the JCA-AHF meeting participants were already in contact with him.

Mr Christopher JONES requested that JCA-AHF share with Mr Kofmel two ITU-T Technical Paper on accessible meetings and remote participation, so that Mr Kofmel can disseminate them within his organization:

* [FSTP-AM (2015)](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-AM) “Guidelines for accessible meetings”
* [FSTP-ACC-RemPart (2015)](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC) “Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all”

## Interference testing between T-Coil systems and WPT for mobile phones

Mr Brian COPSEY from Copsey Communications reported remotely on interference testing between T-Coil systems and Wireless Power chargers (WPT) for mobile phones (JCA-AHF [Document 364](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc364.zip)). Wireless Power Transfer (WPT) devices are used amongst other things to charge mobile phones, and there are now some 3069 different models on the market. WPT devices for this purpose use radio spectrum close to the T-coil system and are likely to be in the same premises and in proximity to hearing aids, there has been concern that such devices would generate interference to T-coil systems (including the hearing aid receiver). The testing was conducted with representative sample of four WPT charging devices against three hearing aids using T-Coil and two broadcast radio receivers. The testing results showed no interference detected on the tested conditions. Mr Copsey is hoping to test against higher power devices, as well as electric vehicle chargers to assess the risk.

## Difficulties to access communication and information services on Internet

JCA-AHF Chairman presented JCA-AHF [Document 359](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc359.docx) on Difficulties to access communication and information services on Internet, on behalf of Mr Daniel BATTUfromEchange Consultant Technicians International (ECTI). The document raised issues experienced personally by Mr Battu in using ICTs. JCA-AHF Chairman thanked him to raise the issues but no discussion was made because the issues were deemed to be out of scope of JCA-AHF. Chairman gave some contacts so that Mr Battu can address the issues.

## Utilising the skills of Deaf interpreters with new technology

Mr Matt Simpson from Ericson presented Red Bee Media (RBM)’s accessibility service and efforts to remove barriers to facilitate the full utilization of the skills. The presentation was made at Q26/16 meeting the day before and available in JCA-AHF [Document 362](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc362.docx). The service enables deaf interpreters to provide sign language interpretation on TV programmes as hearing interpreters do. Real-time caption/subtitle stream is delivered to deaf interpreters who then translate from text to sign language. The service is provided on various TV programmes, including BBC News.

Mr Jones stated that this service would be good for IPTV closed signing, and asked whether such deaf interpreters can work remotely connecting to London for broadcasting. Mr Simpson explained that certain specific types of technical signal was necessary for broadcast television, and video stream from outside of the infrastructure of full TV studio would not be delivered with the quality that their viewers expect. However, closed signing would be a solution and IPTV may have less technical constraints to enable interpreters to provide the service from home.

Mr Beat Kleeb from Procom asked the issue of the time lag of sign language delivered by deaf interpreters. Mr Simpson explained an experiment conducted by RBM comparing sign language delivered by both deaf and hearing interpreters. They found that once the real-time caption stream displayed, deaf interpreter were going roughly at the same speed as the hearing interpreter.

It was discussed that possible standardization area would be the processes to ensure the image is captured at the correct frame rate and resolution and that the data is propagated through any systems and delivered to end-users’ screen with a close quality to the original image as possible. This standardization possibility will be considered at Q26/16.

JCA-AHF Chairman requested to add the [link to the short clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=119&v=87Y4cnz9Qrk) showing this work.

# Incoming Liaison Statements

## LS on new work item on draft Recommendation ITU-T E.disab from ITU-T SG2

JCA-AHF Chairman briefly explained an incoming Liaison Statement from ITU-T SG2 on new work item on draft Recommendation ITU-T E.disab "Specification of an international numbering resource for use in the provisioning of services for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs" available in JCA-AHF [Document 352](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2019/June2019/JCA-AHF-Doc352.doc). This work item is to develop criteria for assigning resources under a new country code for services for people with disabilities. JCA-AHF Chairman explained the background of this work item. An international numbering resource may be developed into an assisted global conference call platform that will enable simultaneous conversations for persons with disabilities according to their specific needs. This platform may include a possible service to enable a telecom relay service user to make international call when they are traveling in another country where they don’t register for the use of telecom relay services. This introduction opened a discussion at the JCA-AHF meeting, and opinions raised during the discussion are below:

* Connect to telecom relay services from another country is currently possible, but charging issue is complex, as funding scheme is different depending on countries, some countries have national funding, in other countries operators pay, etc.
* Even though international numbering resources are available, these still should have to be translated into local numbers. Thus the charging issue would still remain.
* Relay services users need to register for the use of the local relay service in advance, to make an emergency call locally.
* Emergency call should be possible without calling internationally, when relay services users are traveling in another country. However, different sign language would be used.
* The video part of video relay service is made over the IP network, and communication between a communication assistant and a hearing person is made over voice telephone line.

# Future events related to accessibility

Non-exhaustive list of future events related to accessibility was presented by JCA-AHF Chairman.

* [M-Enabling Summit 2019](https://www.m-enabling.com/) (organized by G3ict), Washington DC, 17-19 June 2019
* HLPF 2019: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality “Fostering digital transformation and global partnerships for SDG achievement”[Aligning WSIS process with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development], New York, 11 July 2019
* [XVIII World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)](https://www.wfdcongress2019.org/), Paris, 23-27 July 2019
* [23rd Telecommunications for the deaf and hard of Hearing(TDI) Biennial Conference](https://tdiforaccess.org/2019/06/tentative-2019-tdi-conference-agenda-announced/), 15-17 August 2019 at Gallaudet University
* ITU-D Study Group 1 Rapporteur Group meetings, Geneva, 23 September - 4 October 2019
* ITU-D Study Group 2 Rapporteur Group meetings, Geneva, 7 - 18 October 2019
* ITU Accessible Europe, Malta, 4-6 December 2019

# Next JCA-AHF meeting

It is planned during the Study Group 16 (7 – 17 October 2016). (Post meeting note: It was confirmed for 10 October 2019.)

# Closing of the meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking the meeting participants, the interpreters, the caption writer and ITU staff for their support.

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