



## Outcome report: Post Covid Living: Enabling an inclusive society

**Session Date and Time: Session 1, Friday, 9 July 2021 (06:00 – 07:00 Geneva time). 60 minutes.**

### **Moderator:**

- Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

### **Speakers:**

- Mr. Kensuke Hisatomi, NHK Japan
- Ms. Tahani Iqbal, Public Policy Manager, Connectivity & Access Policy, Facebook
- Mr. Sebastien Codeville, Chief Executive Officer, KaiOS Technologies, Inc.

### **1. Session summary :**

Panelists highlighted the opportunities of emerging technologies, while also noting the importance of affordability and accessibility to enable the wider society to take advantage of the changing landscape. This requires a focus on vulnerable group and communities.

### **2. Main outcomes highlighting the following:**

#### **a. Discussed Topics:**

Advanced immersive Audio-visual (AIAV) Systems; Ensuring accessibility for content; affordable smart feature phones.

#### **b. Key achievements and challenges shared by the panellists and/or the audience**

- NHK's AIAV systems are composed of Before/After VR, Extremely High-resolution VR, and Spare Sharing Content Viewing Systems. Use cases include emergency response (viewing before/after effects of disaster), creating very high-resolution 360 degree images for production, and TV production in two different physical locations simultaneously.

- Facebook's accessibility tools are all designed and based on research and consultations with the disability community. To improve accessibility, specific tools utilized include improving accessibility of video through captioning and AI-enabled automatic captioning. Also, improving accessibility of photos through automatic alt text (AAT) tools, available in 45 languages (20 of which are Asia-Pacific region languages).

- KaiOS has created a smart feature phone, in between smartphone and feature phone, to make phone ownership and device affordability more accessible. This capacity also motivates local content creators and app developers to make new content/apps for those unconnected. Successfully launched in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Tanzania, with telco partnerships.

- Device financing is also important. Nano-loans allow for devices to be adopted quickly, while accelerating the 2G transition.

- The semiconductor shortage currently is also an opportunity to accelerate transition to 4G, as 3G cheaper handsets may be phased out due to handset creators supply prioritization. There is an opportunity to migrate from 2G to 4G.

#### **c. Main conclusions reached during the discussion**

- There are broad range of emerging technologies that can address needs of vulnerable groups, but these technologies are data intensive and affordability (beyond devices) needs to be looked at.
- These technologies are dependent on extensive, reliable, and affordable connectivity, especially for SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs., meaning that accelerating building of broadband networks is needed to ensure these emerging technologies can be provided affordably.
- Machine language training is needed to make automated captioning work better, but this is a long-term multistakeholder expert that can make the internet more inclusive
- Latency is a challenge in AIAV tools. Good connectivity/infrastructure and broadband is needed for immersive media, but 5G is an opportunity for this too.
- Co-creation of solutions and ecosystems among companies, civil society, academia, and government will be key – each stakeholder has their own strength and solution to the table.

### 3. Panellists contributions to the outcome reports

*What are the opportunities and challenges of emerging technology (specific to the session topic) for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS?*

- To reproduce 360 images or 3D models of the distant place is the opportunity and challenge.
- Around the world, we see similar challenges and opportunities for access to internet services and connectivity for persons with disabilities. In a post-Covid world, access to digital connectivity has become a foundational requirement, and it is even more so for people with disabilities. Harnessing emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), improving language models, and fine-tuning accessibility features online will be critical to bringing and keeping more people online.

*What are the most important points/aspects of the emerging technology that should be considered in order to accelerate the digital transformation in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS?*

- I think that disseminating the broadband network is the important point.
- We believe that AI will be central to the continued expansion and improvement of digital accessibility by improving additional interactive experiences at scale, whether they are visual in nature or otherwise. As AI systems get better at understanding images, video, audio, and other media, Facebook believes that more novel and robust innovations in accessibility will follow. Further investment at the intersection of AI and accessibility will be vital for building technologies at a global scale that are inclusive for all.

*Takeaway: please provide one key word and one sentence that most fit the session topic."*

- Casual access to the information.
- Inclusion. Inclusive and accessible connectivity means giving everyone - including people with disabilities - the power to build community and bring the world closer together.
- While data costs are also one of the key drivers of affordability, the data infrastructure is also underutilized, which drives data costs up. By putting more

people on smart feature phones, there will be more users, which may also lower the cost of data.