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Accessible Europe: ICT for ALL
ITU JORGE ARAY'S SPECIALL ADDRESS
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>> Test. You all set?

>> Test.

>> Ladies and gentlemen, as promised, we have a special intervention welcome after the lunch. We hope you had a good time. I see that my colleagues are still coming, but it's the

time to start.

So, we have a special guest, as we talked already earlier. It's my great pleasure to invite this special guest for making the speech on behalf of the CPRD. So, CRPD. Sorry, I'm dyslexic. So, this speech was possible. Thank you.

>> MR. JORGE ARAYA: Thank you. Thank you so much. My name is Jorge Araya. I'm staff member in the Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and while I was listening to all of you in the morning, actually I was -- I felt like bombarded by so much information, figures. I was thinking, oh, my gosh, how -- sorry. I think that how you can absorb, I mean such trivial amount of information. So, I had prepared a presentation and the presentation was about Human Rights approach to accessibility, but actually, I was listening to you and all the elements of the Human Rights approach to access were mentioned by you in your presentations, so I change my mind, I changed my presentation, and just, I mean in the -- during the lunchtime I had the opportunity because my presentation was postponed to the afternoon, I had the opportunity to prepare a presentation trying to wrap up your

interventions in the morning, and to show you how you are involved all of you are involved in, let's say, these Human Rights approach to accessibility. So, I will start with -- you will see I will propose the following: I do not have much text in the slides. It's like very simple. It's in line probably with principles universal design. I just want you to think about your field of activity, what you are doing, and ask in the morning, many of you mentioned the idea of monitoring standards. Maybe, I mean, what we can go through, this is light and think about your activities and think about doing a self-assessment if you are compliant with, I mean, the Human Rights standards of persons with disabilities in the convention on the person with disabilities. I propose to you this exercise. Of course not criticizing any you have feel that you are doing well, it will be great. But if you feel you can do more, that would also be great, you know. So, let's start and you will broadly you will be reflected yourself in some of this because every single word that you will hear or see or, you know, you have been mentioning this technology during your presentation.

So, let's go here. So, convention on the rights of persons with

disabilities. Many, many of you mentioned the convention and many of you, of course, referred to accessible ICTs and some of you referred to the committee on the rise of persons with community with the rise of persons with disabilities, CRPD, and yes one of you mentioned that a committee has produced several general comments which basically are interpretations of the convention. One of these general comments is fully devoted to article 9, accessibility, and then we have had the privilege of having dialogues with than 70 countries, parties to the conventions and other parties to the commission including the European Union. So, this is, let's say, evidence-based analysis.

So, you mention, let's say, accessibility and I will always saying that, I mean, what you mentioned really reflects whether the committee has developed in its in interpretation of commission. It is important to have a policy and plan of action of accessibility. This plan of action, this policy, standards, regulation, whatever you would like to call them, because I'm not talking just about state actors, I'm also talking about non-state actors. So, everyone should have baselines indicators

and benchmarks to really measure the progress you are achieving in implementing your standards, the convention, mainly, and then accessibility policies and action plans should be regularly evaluated and monitored.

Many of you referred to that all these activities should be carried out with a full participation and involvement of persons with disabilities and their legitimate organizations, so that is wonderful that this was widely acknowledged here in this room this morning, and then of course I mean, all these plans, all these regulations should call for accountability framework, meaning that perpetrators, those that infringe on this standard, there should be sanctions, appropriate sanctions and of course procedures to address these lack of implementation of accessibility standards.

Accessible public procurement promoting accessibility. You referred to both of them in the morning, so public procurement as a tool for promoting accessibility in the non-state and private sectors, but public procurement should also be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Continuous training. Many of you referred to this in the

morning. I mean, the necessity to have continuous training. Accessible data and it's wonderful that here you referred to sustainable development goals, so all these ICTs goals. So, be a tool for improving the collection of data and the collection of de-segregated data, including in the field of information and communication technologies.

I mean, all of these, all was we are doing is about promoting independent living. And, I see that this was brought about by many of you. I mean, all of this has a sense when we are working together to promote independent living alternatively with persons with disabilities.

When we promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

And, we ensure that all persons with disabilities, including the more marginalized, are, I mean, represented.

You will see further slides about this, but it seems to me that some of you touch upon the elderly with disabilities and I remember that there was a powerful photo or picture of an elderly with disabilities using technology and this was very powerful image.

Gender sensitive. That is very important. A few of you mentioned this gender dimension of ICTs, accessible ICTs, but, I mean, if you think about percentage of women with disabilities around the world that have access to accessible ICTs, so this should be, let's say, also reflected in statistics and should inform our policies.

Age sensitive. I just mentioned this a moment ago. And, then I would like to say a few words about what you reflected in your presentations about accessible information and communication technologies from a Human Rights perspective and many of you pointed out to the key features of Human Rights approach to accessible ICTs. I mean, which are these features.

Of course, I mean, states and non-state actors should promote access to accessible ICT. So, one thing is to have accessible ICT and another one is to promote access to these accessible ICT.

Again, I mean, information should be accessible. Information on ICTs should also be accessible and you pointed out, as well, to this feature. This our policy standards, relationship promote the availability, so sometimes accessible ICTs is not available

in some parts of our countries. I am thinking about mainly rural areas or, let's say, poor urban areas, so I mean, every single policy should promote reliability and use of accessible ICTs. Affordable ICTs, of course, and for persons with disabilities and for all, I think that some of you also emphasize this aspect, and has been coming up many, many times in your interventions, and so accessible ICTs that identify and remove barriers. It is not, I mean for the sake of having accessible ICTs is for the sake of identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities encounter in their daily lives, and many of you referred to the promotion of research on ICTs, which is also in the UN CRPD, and I will insist on this, because this is a main, the main component of Human Rights base accessible ICTs, respect the diversity of persons with disabilities was mentioned many, many times, and I really acknowledge all of you that mention this feature and, again, I mean all what I will insist on that because it is very important, we need to emphasize that we are here to promote autonomy and independent living of persons with disabilities. My wish, as every expressed their wish, my wish is that all

persons with disabilities everywhere have access to their independent living with sufficient support and with accessible services, goods, and information and communication technologies in the community.

Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

>> (Applause)

>> Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much. And, thank you very much to our distinguished guest to joining us, and now we invite the panelist from the next session to join us on the panel.

So, let me present the moderator, Andrea Saks and the chairman of the ITOT and VCA a joint coordination action on accessibility and human factor.

And, the distinguished panelists who are Mr. Masahito Kawamori and ITOT Rapporteur, Question 26 Rapporteur. Who is coming from Japan and to join us.

Ms. Monique Mai director of operating, communication, standardization, accessibility group, department of orange.

Beat Kleep from Switzerland, Seth Bravin from Sprint and Lidia Smolarek-Best of hearing people.

So, dear ladies and gentlemen, I hand you --

>> You just did my job. You introduced everybody.

>> (Laughter)

>> I might say succumb more words about each person in a second when we all get settled.

Thank you, Euroslav, you're wonderful.

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: Okay. Welcome to the session on relay services. I have here a very interesting group of people. They've had their names readout, but what is really interesting is that we have a panelist of users, and we also have a telecommunications company, and we have a Rapporteur from ITU who specializes in doing accessible standards and he's in charge.

Now, let me just go through this again. We have Beat Kleeb, and Beat is one of the founders of the Swiss relay service called Pro Com. He's been working with us for a very long time at ITU and I met him ages ago, and he's been doing accessibility advocacy work for about 35 years, is that about -- I don't know if he is watching his own, he is reading his thing. But anyway, Beat does not hear. Beat will sign and be interpreted.

Then I have next to Beat and to Monique, I have Seth Bravin from the United States who holds a very important position with Sprint relay. Now, Sprint is an American telephone company, but they have a branch, and it's Sprint relay. The people who actually work in it are persons with disabilities who are deaf who need to actually use the relay themselves, so they know what people need.

Then I have Monique Mai from Orange who has been working inaccessibility for about, oh, gosh, 16, 17 years or something like that.

>> MS. MONIQUE MAI: 14 years.

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: We can pad a few more. By the time you're done with this group it will feel like 16 years. Monique is associated with orange which has come into effect in the last few years.

On my immediate left I have Lidia Best who is the European federation for the hard of hearing chairman and is extremely active for civil rights for persons with disabilities and Lidia is hard of hearing, and a lot of people don't realize hard of hearing people need relay service.

And then on my far left, I have Masahito Kawamori from Japan, who is our Rapporteur in ITUT study group 16 question 26 and is also very involved in relay services not only from a standards point of view but in his own country of Japan. So, with that I'm not going to say much more, other than to show you something. Relay services started in the 1960's, late 1960's. There is a book here, it's The Beginning of Text telephony, my family was involved, I think out of desperation, because I was the relay service. I'm 72. So, you can imagine it was pretty antiquated times. And, also, there is another group here, and if you want to look at these books later, you can, telecommunications for the deaf incorporated which provided the surplus tele prompters. I won't go into a history with you, but if anyone wants to know the history I'm happy to share while I'm here.

All right, Beat, would you like to take the floor, please.

>> Beat Kleeb: Ladies and gentlemen, if you were to meet me in the streets somewhere, you couldn't see that I'm a deaf person. I cannot hear. I'm part of a group with a disability. I am part of a large and invisible group of persons with

disabilities; the deaf and the hard of hearing.

The size of this group is largely underestimated. There are 70 million deaf persons, 466 million hard of hearing persons, and that is more than 15% of the population.

There are over a billion young people that are at risk of hearing loss due to exposure to very loud noises.

Next slide.

Hearing loss has serious consequences for people living in a hearing society.

The next slide, please.

Our group is often closed out from communication, from information, from education, from job opportunities, from entertainment, things that we enjoy, and we have -- we suffer from social -- we're shut out from social inclusion. With the inability to hear, deaf people depend on visual communication. Most deaf persons learn national sign language as their first language. This is a visual language, and it inherently comprises all of the linguistic elements that you see in spoken languages, as well. There are a number of tools to provide visual accessibility to communication. One of these is sign

live sign language interpreters as you see here in this meeting. Sometimes on video and on TV. There is captioning or subtitling that happens live as you are witnessing here on the screen, as well. There this also can happen on video and television. And there are telephone relay services for sign language, as well as for text.

What is not so good for us are Avatars and signing robots or automatic speech recognition, ASR.

Of Avatars and ASR, they're promoted more and more, but they are not an effective tool for communication. The reason for this is that they cannot yet translate the signs of a deaf person into voice, so this produces a one-way conversation only. And, the quality is far, far below our requirements.

It's not possible to have a usable dialogue with any of those systems at this point.

There are also laws on confidentiality in telecommunications, and I am not so sure if any of these companies can analyze my private conversations on the phone. I'm not sure where that sits within privacy laws. My opinion is that it would be against the law. As deaf people, we have -- we're allowed to

have privacy. It's our right.

Next slide, please.

Despite many national laws for equal rights, for persons with disabilities related to equal access to communication, despite the UN CRPD, despite international standards for relays, especially coming from ITU, less than 20 countries worldwide provide telephone relay services with -- that have equal functionality. So, we are behind with our rights in this way. Society and manufacturers must cooperate with organizations for deaf and hard of hearing people. We must be included in equal partners in the development of accessibility policies. The long presentation from me can be found on the website for this conference, and thank you so much for supporting us to have access. Thank you.

>> (Applause)

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: I want to thank my timer. Thank you. We have a timer, ladies and gentlemen, she's sitting right in front, and we have -- and she is going -- when she puts up two minutes and you have to wind up.

I would like to introduce Seth from Sprint relay. Please go

ahead.

>> MR. SETH BRAVIN: So, I'm going to be voiced by ol law fur. Andrea thank you for the introduction. Can we open my slides? Great. Thank you.

So I'm going to be talking about the ecosystem, the framework, and my personal experience as a deaf person. And, also a case study on New Zealand, just to give you an idea of how Sprint works with other countries.

As Andrea mentioned, I'm from the U.S. and I'm very proud of the history of the relay industry in the U.S. We've been working with relay at Sprint for 28 years, and we do this with integrity and honesty. In the U.S. we have four large telecommunication companies, Sprint, AT&T, Verizon and T. mobile. Sprint is the only telecom that provides a relay service in the United States. Back in the 1980's, before the ADA Americans with disabilities act was passed, I'm from a large deaf family and I remember my parents and my grandparents were also deaf, couldn't call hearing people. I mean, I remember that being little when I was growing up and a young boy in the 70's and 80's, we had to ask our neighbors to make phone calls for us. And, that was tough,

you know, it was hard. In the 80's we started to have relay service, but it was volunteer based. So, non-regulated FCC wasn't involved. After the ADA was passed in 1990, everything changed. Sprint relay started to provide the service and after 20 years in the industry I cannot imagine doing my job without relay service. I mean, it's had a profound impact on my personal ability to thrive in the workplace.

So, we provide different types of services. We provide text relay service e, video relay services, caption telephone service and speech to speech services for those who have speech disabilities.

Next slide, please.

So, what you see here at the slide before, thank you. Sorry. It's a very, very simple image, but it's very simply states how we work with stakeholders, how we work with public sector ITU, different Governments, and it's very, very important that we also work with the disability community.

For the past 25 plus years we worked very closely with organizations of people with disabilities, with the deaf and hard of hearing community, to get their experience. What is the

end user experience? What is their feedback? But, we're also very proactive in hiring them, as well. We have people with disabilities on our team, and it's not just a token amount. There is a large amount of deaf and hard of hearing people who work for Sprint. There is a large amount of blind people. We have deaf-blind people working for us. We have people in wheelchairs. So, the federal government pays for the relay service, but they're also paying via that the disabled people who work for us, right. So, it's like completing the circle of we're creating taxpayers.

So, if you look at the top, right, the government is the funding mechanism, right. So, how, then, does the government regulate the service? And there is different regulatory types in every environment, in every country. So, then therefore, what is the rule of the private sector?

So, Sprint, our capacity to provide network connectivity, our capacity to engage with the deaf community, our capacity to provide quality relay service is what we're there for. The role of the disabled community, the role of disability organizations are also integral here, too.

Next slide, please.

Right. So, here you can see a schema that shows a lot of moving parts. So, these are things you have to consider and they will vary depending on which environment you're working in. The most important part is your ability to provide a functionally equivalent service. To make sure that interpreters and operators are understanding the importance of confidentiality. We want to provide deaf and hard of hearing people the assurance that whatever phone call they make, it's their phone call, right. So, it's not somebody else is not going to be listening in, somebody else is not going to be studying the phone call. So, the FCC provides that assurance, and we realize and recognize that with every call we're impacting that person's life. The quality of that person's life. And, that recognition is very, very important. So, you're calling the doctor, you're calling your child's teacher, you're calling to order a pizza, whatever it is, you feel equal. So, what is the service level? What are the KPIs, right, the key performance indicators? For example, in the states, for relay services, text relay services, we have to answer 85% of all phone calls within 10

seconds. It's different for video relay service where you have a little bit more time, but we're still under this pressure to answer the calls.

Next slide, please.

So, this is just a quick snapshot of what we've done in New Zealand. We've worked with New Zealand for over ten years. We've also worked with U.S. Virgin Island, Puerto Rico and other countries that I can't really discuss here, but we had some challenges with the interpreters in New Zealand so we merged with a university who was training interpreters in New Zealand to build the pipeline of interpreters that were needed to make sure that the disabled community had the quality service that they needed. And, I'll stop there. Thank you.

>> (Applause)

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: Thank you, Seth.

Okay. The next person on my list of speakers is Lidia Best of the European hard of hearing. You want to do your own slides. Can we have the slide changer. Thank you.

>> MS. LIDIA SMOLAREK-BEST: Thank you for inviting me to speak today, and this is a great pleasure to be able to address

colleagues here.

I've already been introduced, but also there is additional information about me. I'm polish. I was born in Poland and I leave many years now in the UK, and my personal experience is, and I really wanted to my light this, is the need for hard of hearing people and the use of relay services.

One of the reasons is because I was counting my blessings, when I lived in the UK when I suddenly lost my hearing, my remaining hearing. It started living in Poland at the time. Because in the UK I was able to use telephones calls without any relay support from my sons or friends or family. I was able to use text relay service which we have in the U K, and this was definitely liberating and possibility to still have something when something has happened.

So, it's often assumed, of course, that hard of hearing people would rely mostly on the telephone calls using sound amplifiers and telecom as well.

Yes, we do, but majority of the case it relates to speaking to friends and family, because we are used to the intonations in the voices. We are used to the voices of how they speak, how we

pronounce words. When it comes to strangers, or especially in the UK when dealing with so many different accents in English, mine included, it's so hard. It really is so hard suddenly we are panicking and we cannot cope with the call. There is a lot of anxiety.

One of the first questions a potential employer will ask is most of the time during the job interviews, can you actually manage a telephone calls? And the panic starts. Most of the time.

(Laughter). So, it's so important, the relay service, the caption service is available.

In addition to that we have employment figures across Europe where it shows a person with disabilities, but especially deaf and hard of hearing are underrepresented in employment. And, especially in terms of moving upwards in our possibility and promotion. So, telecalls are important, because more and more jobs rely on telecalls.

So, what we have in UK is relay service which has been enabled communication act in 2003, and this relay service has started in 1991, but I have to pay comments to Andrea Saks, because she was one of the first persons bringing the relay text service to UK

from which later, of course, we have started also relay service, and 1991 it officially started and it was started by the (Inaudible) organization originally, and when British telecom, the largest provider telecom provider has been mandated by Opcom our regulator to provide the relay services. Since 2014 we have the possibility to use an app on our mobile smart phones and we are able to make calls on the move, but primarily access is via land line, as well.

So, this service is available 24/7 365 days with no extra charge, and often especially using land line services we get around, I'm not exactly sure if it is (Inaudible) but around 70% of the call is reimbursed because the text relay call takes longer than the normal voice call. That has been already taken into the account.

And I've added here for anyone who needs to have a look at what exactly wording has been used in our communications act, and making sure that provision access to relay services for end users has to be ensured. So, this is very important message. But telephone relay services are work well when they are functional equivalence so we can use the telephone calls in a

similar way, if not same way, as hearing people can. So, my question is: Are all deaf and hard of hearing people in Europe able to use a telephone in the same unrestricted manner, and at the same cost, so we do not pay extra cost of the calls. And, the answer is not at all. As I mentioned, my home country as well. So, what we need is the next steps, development of funding models with no additional cost for users, and my previous colleagues, as well, have mentioned that. Relay service provision has to be enshrined in the national laws. We cannot move forward. Services need to be developed with users involvement and basically repeating the same message. And, for us, especially hard of hearing people, introduction of captioned telephony.

But, beware of using automated speech recognition as a standalone service. There is a very simple reason, which also my previous colleague has spoken about it. It can fail in functional equivalence when it comes to accuracy and we really want to be accurate when we are having the telephone calls.

Thank you very much.

>> (Applause)

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: Thank you, Lidia. And, now I would like Monique -- I never can say your last name properly.

>> MS. MONIQUE MAI: Mai.

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: I don't know why because it's easy. Monique Mai of orange. Would you like to give a presentation about relay service in your country, please.

>> MS. MONIQUE MAI: First of all, I would like to say thank you for inviting me, because just -- I just want to give a small information.

I don't work in a body, public body. I work in a communication company, which is located which works in, which is operating in 28 countries. We are around 35,000 employees, and of course in this employees amount, we have persons which are disabled.

I just want to underline that yesterday I heard a good talk, France doesn't have a relay center. Well, we launch a relay center on the 7 of October this year, and on this slide, we, I just want to underline that we are strengthening regulation. It made sense year 2005 where the first regulation, the first text which was published was a text which underline the (Inaudible) and every year we got a new text. And, as I told you, we are

not public body, we are just a company, and I will not -- I will not go through all of the dates, but I just want to underline that year 2016 was the year of the digital law -- was a year of digital law for France means that we have free obligation in this law, which is first obligation is to set up a relay center. Second obligation is to set up a customer, what can we say, an accessible customer relationship for the deaf people and impaired out of hearing people.

So, what do we say? Two obligations for private company and the third one was also for public services, but I will just give you some information on the obligations that the private company got.

(Inaudible) information, it is not only private company, it is tell co-for the first obligation, we have as a Telco to finance, to fund a relay center. It means that it's not the same business model or it's not the same organizations and NVOs or countries.

In France, on the year 2015 we got an experimentation under the administration for one year the deaf and hard of hearing people got kind of relay center, and after we the experimentation,

that's the situation was blocked and then a regulation was promoted and this regulation doesn't ask to all the companies to set up the relay center. This regulation just asked to the Telco company to set up some solution. So, in a specific organization that we call French federation of telecommunication where you find a main Telco, you can find a (Inaudible) who telecom mobile. Well, we have meeting and we wrote RFB and we tried to check the different solution in -- on the market in French market.

So, just to underline what I told you.

>> Ms. Sacks: Go back the other way. Push.

>> MS. MONIQUE MAI: I forgot to say that the new obligation concern also deaf and blind and aphasics. We are to launch the answer to this obligation for the 7 of October, and was do we decided when we have this meeting with the French telecommunication association? Accept free, which is another tele, but free doesn't belong to this association. We decided to choose hold your voice in partnership with AV. Hold your voice set up a solution and this solution is a mobile app and we are able to satisfy speech language LPC text braille for the

French association asks some graduate people, so it means that we have enter translator which are graduates with four years of study. You can have also on YouTube the demonstration.

How do we work? In fact, with the new law, we have to, as a Telco, we have to refer to our customer one hour of translation. That means the first obligation. After that in two years we have three hours, and in 2026 we have full day.

I just want to underline, because I just have one minute, that we also set up at the same time an accessible customer relationship. For example, I show this slide a website were we propose dedicated solution, and where we have the choice between phone, sign language and so on and all the solution. It means also we have accessible catalog on the website and we try to answer to our customer and we associate our users and consumer to define some products. It means that we are listening our consumer and of course we did not do that without contribution of the employees and deaf association. It means that we try to meet their need.

Any questions, if you want. Thank you for your attention. Just next, you have a summary of the obligations.

>> (Applause)

>> Ms. Sacks: Thank you, Monique. I just want to make a comparison. This is the beginning in France for deaf people, and Monique and I have known each other quite a while, and what will happen when she says she is going to be hearing from customers, they all know what the other countries have. Things will begin and hopefully to change when the deaf community begins to start to really speak now that they have a voice. One of the things I wanted to also say is that what we like to see, and what is really necessary coming from a deaf background is that everybody has heard this saying, nothing about us without us. It did come from the deaf community. They're a part of humanity and they are going to be the people that change the world on relay service, and have done so in the U.S. and in Switzerland, and in the UK and I would like to now give the floor to Masahito Kawamori, who is our Rapporteur for accessibility in ITUT question 26, study group 16, and hopefully he will touch on some of the problems that are in the beginning of starting relay services and the responsibilities that the Telco's should be taking. Maybe. I hope so. Please, go ahead.

>> MR. MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Masahito Kawamori, I'm from ITUT, study group 16, question 26. And, go like this. Okay.

So, as you know, ITU is part of the United Nations. It is responsible for information communication technologies. It's the oldest international organization. It's older than the United Nations itself. It was established in 1865 as a history. It has become very important in the event of Titanic, and SOS is also one of the standards from ITU.

ITU-T is the telecom standardization sector, and our question, question 26 of study group 16 is the lead group for accessibility standardization in ITU-T.

Question 26 in our group we work closely with persons with disabilities. We work with the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as international federation of the hard of hearing, as well as other UN organizations like WHO, World Health Organization. So, we're trying to accommodate and listen to the voices of the persons with disabilities as much as possible. And, ITU-T standard has been well known worldwide. For example, there is very famous video code called H.264 which is widely used on the

web, including YouTube, and for that ITU-T has awarded any award for two times, second time last year.

There are other famous or other ITU-T standards like international tele cone country code, which is like the United States has number 1, I don't know Austria has 36 or something, I don't know (Laughter), or 46, I don't know (Laughter). And, okay. Okay. 32.

>> 43.

>> MR. MASAHIRO KAWAMORI: Okay. I'm sorry. (Laughter). Or 5G. 5G is a new development, as well as accessibility profile for ITPV as well as waive finder which is a navigational audio base navigation for visually impaired people. And, we have a new recommendation or a standard called multimedia telecommunication relay services which is a standard for telephone relay service from ITU-T.

This recommendation or standard has been drafted by us and it provides a functional description of four common types of relay services in use today. These are text to relay service, video relay service with sign language interpretation, captioned telephone service relay for people who can speak but cannot

hear, and speech to speech relay service, which is for people who cannot speak, but can hear. And, this lays out specific functional requirements of relay services that are relevant to equipment, call set-up, call and experience, especially emergency communications and message retrieval.

This is a typical telephone relay service. Do you think you can play the video? Okay.

(Video)

>> MR. MASAHIKO KAWAMORI: So, this deaf person is signing to the communication assistant and --

>> Are you coming to the family reunion?

>> I can hardly wait.

>> MR. MASAHIKO KAWAMORI: She is translating the voice. Then the hearing person can speak in voice and then that's interpreted into sign language.

Okay. Thank you.

So, can you go back to the slides.

So, telephone relay service is actually a way for deaf and hard of hearing people to communicate with a hearing person in voice.

So, that's the very important part. So, it is like a real

regular phone, and voice is needed by what we call communication assistant. They change voice into text or sign language or vice versa.

And, what is a telephone relay service from a standard point of not only technology, but also from legal perspective? It should be a basic telephone service like Voice telephone, regular voice telephone service. It should be able to provide functional equivalency, our colleagues have been talking about it quite a lot. And, it should be able to provide emergency calls. This is very, very important, and should be provided to anyone on equal basis. And, should be provided 24 hours seven days a week, like a regular phone.

And functional equivalency is a capability with a person with disabilities to provide communication service or a system with a level of offered functions convenience of use that is similar to those offered to a wider group of users in a mainstream. It implies that users of relay services would not be at a disadvantage compared to the calling options available to the mainstream. In other words, prices or the physical conditions should be similar and equivalent in function to the regular

phones.

So, if you compare, if we compare Voice telephone and telephone relay service, this is a very simple diagram that tells the differences. So, voice telephone, of course, can be used for 24 hours seven days a week with stable operation available to anyone any time, but for telephone relay service, currently is not necessarily available for 24 hours or every day. Some countries it is, but in some countries not, or not at all. And, it can be used for any purpose. Voice telephone can be used for emergency or bank account or hospitals, anything. But for telephone relay service, some restrictions may apply. Voice telephone is realtime interactive, but in some countries telephone relay service is not realtime. And, voice telephone currently can be provided at an appropriate cost, affordable cost, but telephone relay service can be more expensive. And, Voice telephone is always bi directional. Meaning anyone hearing or non-hearing can talk to anyone, any other person anywhere in the world if a phone number is known, but on the other hand, telephone relay service currently, especially international calls may still be difficult or not possible.

Sometimes the service can be initiated only by a person with disabilities not the other way a round. Voice telephone is standardized so you can use anywhere in the world, but telephone relay service is not so standardized so there are many different solutions for different countries, regions and services.

So, from the functionality, functional equivalence points of view, we have to standardize and provide more standardized approach to relay service, because as we discussed previously, United Nations CRPD states that nations, Governments should ensure persons with disabilities on an equal basis to information and communication technologies. And, as I said, telecom relay service currently is the only way for deaf and hard of hearing people to communicate with hearing people. That means it's something to be provided as part of rights -- the rights of deaf and hard of hearing people.

So, that's -- so, we need value, we need standardization for this, because it provides functional equivalency, as well as international communication, as well as lower cost of service and equipment.

And, currently at ITU-T we're working on KPS, key performance

indicators for telecom relay service, as well as roaming to enable international calls relay service, as well as AI for accessibility to give guidelines for use of AI, because at the current stage, automatic speech recognition is a hype, but it can be not be used yet.

So, that's the conclusion, but I don't have enough time, so I will just skip it and that's all.

Okay. Thank you very much.

>> (Applause)

>> I have one question. How many time have I got to wrap up?

>> Two minutes.

>> Good. Two minutes. Can I do it.

>> Ms. Sacks: I don't know if we have time to take questions, but I want to say all of the panelists have experience with relay service. I was relay service from the age of two, and I want to see relay services spread. It is only about 20% of the world has a relay service and prevents persons who are deaf and hard of hearing for participating full time in realtime in life, and the technology is here, the legislation is often what is needed to get it done.

If anybody has a quick question, I have one minute. Anybody want to ask any -- okay. Go ahead. You got one minute.

>> Audience: Hi, this is Madon from Smarten Life. I have a question to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

I don't want to offend or I know about the problems about many problems concerning our tasks, robots, et cetera, but I always wonder, okay, that it feels like the community is really saying no, we don't want this at all, versus where I'm sometimes missing, yes, this can be something for the future, and of course it is not good enough yet, but we will try to assist and make and contribute that this assistive technologies can become that good that we can use them in daily life.

>> Ms. Sacks: Thank you for your comment. We have just been given about nine minutes now extra to continue this conversation.

I have to, as a person who grew up in a deaf family, the time is now. Things that aren't good enough or that are being developed, we welcome them, but we want it now, because everybody else has been on the phone forever. We want to have it now.

We have extra time. Would somebody else like to ask a question?

>> I would like to answer it.

>> Ms. Saks: Fine. Sorry.

>> Thank you very much for your very relevant question.

Concerning of Avatar, I think sign language, do you sign yourself?

>> Audience: Unfortunately not.

>> MR. MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Okay. Sign language is a very, very complex language. It is not linear like, you know, linear language.

>> Audience: Yes.

>> MR. MASAHITO KAWAMORI: That means this composition, semantic composition is very different from the words that are spoken, because it's linear. Currently I don't think of Avatars can be created on spot. Right. And, it will be more expensive to do that, right.

>> Audience: Yeah.

>> MR. MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Of course, I think we have to strive for better technology and to make it available, but as Andrea said, we have to do it now. If the reason why of Avatars will

be used is for lowering the cost, then it defeats the purpose, because it will be more expensive to create an of Avatar, because I've been working with some people, I know in that area, but sometimes it's more expensive. If you're from Hollywood and making a lot of good movies, then you can use very good of Avatars, but nobody is paying for that, right.

>> Audience: Yeah.

>> MR. MASAHITO KAWAMORI: For our accessible services. So, I think it will be, of course we can continue to work on it, but I don't think it's the right time to start using of Avatars for this service yet.

>> Audience: I completely agree. I think it's only so, it's not about replacing them right now or saying, okay, we don't want relay services instead of Avatars. Or, the other way around, we don't want -- we want of Avatars now instead of relay services. It is really just about creating the future and creating an assistive technology that hopefully is available in the future in such a good quality and therefore really it needs a positive attitude also especially from the group that would use it, the development can proceed as good as possible.

>> Ms. Andrea sacks: Thank you for your comment. I have to move O. I have questions coming.

First is David, and then Inmaculada and then, I can't think of your name. Okay. Let's take him first. Lucas. Okay Lucas. Hang on one second. One second, and then we'll go to David. David go ahead. Thank you, Lucas.

>> Audience: Thank you. It was a very moving session, and obviously the value to people who needed the relay services was clear.

When you say that it's only available in 20% of the countries of the world, I guess that means that 80% of the world is not complying with the ten-year-old resolution of the United Nations.

>> Ms. Andrea sacks: That is correct.

>> Audience: What I want to know, to change the situation, who needs to do what and when? What are the steps, the practical steps that could be taken by whom and when. Do you need an uprising from Lidia's group or something? How can we practically move from today to a world where there is far more available? Thank you.

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: Well, I can only refer to one thing. It has to be a revolution. They threw out a hearing chancellor at Ghali University because that person was hearing and there was a revolt.

Deaf people have to begin to rise up. You as an individual can do something by communicating, being involved in the deaf community and saying things to others. It is up to the people in this room whether you have a disability or not to speak. Would you like to take that question. Go ahead, Lidia.

>> MS. LIDIA SMOLAREK-BEST: Thank you, David. I would like to answer your question, as well. In relation of pricing, and one of the things important is what the CRPD has in one of the articles about international cooperation, and also to remind us of the message home age applied to Andrea Saks for bringing text service to UK and making the transnational call, you know, years ago. This is because the communities started to talk to each other. After, when I go to Poland and speak to hard of hearing people in Poland, they are really surprised that I am able to use text relay services in the UK, and even didn't know something like this exists. So, apprising, yes, it takes time

to build the capacity and to serve information. Once person with disabilities are aware what in this country you are able to notice and in my country when we start asking questions why. This is when the revolution starts. Thank you.

>> Very quick opinion, because it was a long way for setting the solution in France, and when we met the association, we were very surprised, because we are leader in technology and innovation and, of course, (Ms. Monique Mai) and when we propose for example a combined solution with translator, human interface and so on and for the (Inaudible) we have the possibility to get realtime transcription with augmented reality and correction with artificial intelligence of AVA, it was difficult. So, this question was difficult.

In my opinion, as a deaf community has also to take in account the innovation and I have a lot of hope in the innovation, especially for the 80% of the community who has no solution and the main problems that we met in France it was lack of resource. It means that we did not have enough trained translators and even for all the companies, because I told the other company has to set up accessible relationship when we have tenor 20, 250

million of (Inaudible) we have to set up the relationship, but where do we find the resource if the persons are not trained and if I have an advice, it's to set up some obligation for training people for having the resource, for translating. It's important.

>> Mr. Beat Kleeb: Thank you for your question. I'm happy that you asked. If the government, disabled community, public sector, want to work together, it can happen. In the U.S. you have the Americans with disabilities act, you have the FCC regulating things, so good things will happen if all of the pieces come together (Seth Bravin)

>> Ms. Andrea Saks: Inmaculada is next, please.

>> Inmaculada: Thank you. I have a question to the panel. This morning we heard from the presentation of the European emergency number association that standards are being developed for realtime text, conversation, the link with they emergency piece (Inaudible), and now we're hearing here about the standards for the relay service, which will also have to be used in the context of emergency. So, my question to the panel is: Those standards being developed by advocacy, are they, how are

they linking with the international ITU standards, and on top of that, okay, is great that we at the European level we are trying to have European solutions, but at the end of the day, you've said it, you want to be able to talk or to have realtime text or total conversation with any part of the world. So, how realistic is this in terms of the standardization setting, in terms of the implement able solutions, where are we today and what is the future, how is the future looking?

>> MR. MASAHIRO KAWAMORI: First of all, as far as the numbers are concerned it is being taken care of as the study group 2ITT. As I said it is an international number. So, if the emergency call, some European goes to China or Japan and wants to make a call, emergency call by relay service, then I think it has to be an international number.

>> Ms. Saks: I think that is not the question. We're going to have to work together. We have done it before with ISO, with guideline 71. I'm so happy you said that. I think we'll take this discussion off line, because I want to get to Lucas. But, yes, please Inmaculada, let's work together, because we cannot do parallel things that maybe aren't going to be interoperable,

and where as EPSY and Europe is Europe, ITU is global, but we have worked with other standards organizations in other parts of the world, and we really need to work together. So, can we take that one off line? Because I can't answer it in five minutes.

>> Yes, of course we can take that off line, but my understanding now is that the solutions in the way that corporation has not yet happened; is that correct?

>> Ms. Saks: No, it hasn't. That is true. It is not from not wanting to.

>> Inmaculada: I understand.

>> Ms. Saks: Lucas has been waiting patiently and would like to ask a question or make a statement.

>> Thank you, my name is Lucas, representing the OSHA deaf association. One month ago we had a seminar here in Vienna organized by the European disability forum and one of the topics that was discussed was related to the statistics made in different European countries. So, let's say that the government in certain country wants to gather some data regarding gender, regarding, well, any kind of data that is specifically addressed to certain issues. So, I'm wondering if any government or any

agency at European level actually cooperating with this video relay services, because what I've seen so far is the deaf people get excluded from this kind of statistics just because you're not able of having this conversation over the phone, or is there any other chance to gather information from them, let's say, through a website. So, I think video relay services should solve this problem, and also be used the other way around. Not just for deaf people to communicate with hearing, but also for hearing to communicate with deaf. And, I'm wondering if this is actually happening in anyplace, because I don't really have this information.

So, let's say that we want to know how many deaf people are living in certain country. I think it is also important to gather this kind of data in this way.

>> Also, just to add, the question is about how Governments do a census. So, if Governments are doing a census by calling the citizens of their country, when they don't have a relay service, it means that the count of deaf people is going to be zero, which means they won't put any resources toward a relay system because they don't need it because there are no deaf people.

So, the answer could be, if you have a relay service and you're doing a phone census, you then have a greater opportunity to know actually how many deaf people you have in your country.

>> Ms. Saks: Thank you.

>> So, we would like to know about countries that have relay services, if they have taken advantage of using telephone census surveys with relay to gain more statistics about how many deaf and hard of hearing people live in their state.

>> Ms. Saks: That is a real tall order. I don't have an answer for you, Lucas, at this moment in time, but Lidia would like to make a comment.

Go ahead, Lidia.

>> MS. LIDIA SMOLAREK-BEST: Thank you. In 2011 in UK we had census of the population and for the first time the question of using sign language has been used, and the information and the whole information (Inaudible) has been done to the past. Every single household has received the information, and when it came to the sign language users, they also request person coming directly to see them with interpreter and provide the interpretation and to ensure the questions are answered

correctly. So, we did not use the telephones for the census; however, you are correct about European agency calling and doing statistics using the telephone calls. Obviously when we will be excluded. Thank you.

>> Just one second, please. I just want to underline that for a company like us and all the companies in France, we don't have the right to make difference between the consumer (Monique Mai) so, when we have to set up a forecast for creating a solution for the relay center, we just have to deaf community what is wrong, can you tell us an amount of people who are doing sign language or who have this voice of communication, for example, body complete the language and so they gave us some amount, but we are not sure about this amount, because it's a protection data. We don't have to know who is our customer and, well, it's regulatory mandate.

So, we hope that with practice and what you have to know that regulatory body asks some follow up (Inaudible) KPI and so on, and we will know, for example, what is traffic, the quality of traffic, and so on, but we absolutely know the (Inaudible) data concerning the consumer.

>> Ms. Saks: Hang on. Who am I missing? Okay. Go ahead.

>> Audience: Hello. Based on experiences developing these services for deaf users and users who are hard of hearing, that's ironic. Based on experiences developing these services for deaf users and users who are hard of hearing, how would you recommend rolling them out to other groups such as Autism people who would benefit? Is there anything we can learn from the deaf community?

>> I'm just going to be real quick because I have to wind down. It is very often that persons who are Autism do usury lay services, because some of them do not wish to speak. So, it's not an uncommon thing. I don't have any statistics to give you, but we can talk more off line.

I have to, we've been given extra time. I think we can probably take the whole afternoon, so I'm going to have to wind it down. I'm afraid I can't take any more questions (Ms. Saks) but I'll be --

>> I am Daniel from crow Asia.

>> Ms. Saks: Wait a minute. I can't see where the person -- which person is speaking.

>> Can you see?

>> Ms. Saks: That one. Sorry. I can't because I've just been told I can't.

We'll have to do these questions off line. But we'll be available during coffee break.

>> Okay.

>> Ms. Saks: I can't. I've been told no. I've been given extra time, I can't have anymore or I'll be murdered by Auroslav. So, please for give. (Laughter).

We need, next time, Auroslav may I have 90 minutes instead of an hour.

I want to thank my panelists very much who have given a lot of information and insight and I thank you all for attending and listening to this, and I hope you'll take the point of relay services back into your own country.

Thank you.

Let's give the speakers a round of applause.

(Applause)

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