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JCA‑AHF MEETING

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>> ANDREA SAKS: All right. Okay. I think we are ready to start. It is 5 past ‑‑ well, it's 5 past 3:00 in Geneva time. I want to say this is ‑‑ I'm going to put my picture on so people can see it's me speaking.

Hi, I'm Andrea Saks and I'm the Chairman of the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors and I'll be chairing this meeting. Because we have so many people on, if you're not participating, can you please keep your video off. When it's your turn to speak, will you kindly turn your video on when instructed to do so by the agenda.

We have had a little bit of a change in the agenda to switch some people around. Which I will verbally just say. We're going to put two speakers in front of the first one that we originally planned which was MyMeetings by Gent Barjami. Now we're going to move Item 15, sign avatars, because they're in Japan. That's a big, long, weird time problem. And the same section on ‑‑ same reason on item 19 which is WebVRI because that speaker is also coming from Japan and there's a huge time difference.

There is another change which I'm trying to find. Hang on. Oh. Kaoru, help me. What's the other change?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: The major changes have already been explained by Andrea. Other changes are just minor changes.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. Then we're all right. Now, the agenda is Document JCA‑AHF 434 which Kaoru, our secretariat, right now is displaying. Because also we have so many people and we had such a great response, we are a little stretched for time. So I'm going to stop talking.

If there's a question anybody has about how we do things, could you please either put it in the chat or raise your hand now. And we'll try and clear it up before we start for real. Okay. Good. All right. Okay.

Now, ‑‑ right. Now, the JCA web page I think is where everything is located should you need it and the meeting document page is linked on the agenda should you need it. And the registration is on ‑‑ for the Zoom link is also on the page but you wouldn't be on unless you've done that.

Now, the real-time captioning is done by Caption First and has a separate window, which is on the agenda. If you want to see full‑page captioning. And I use full‑page captioning on one computer and have the rest of it ‑‑ the rest of the program on a separate computer. But I'm violently dyslexic so that's why I do that. It's a good idea if you have two computers. If not, and you need to have something clarified, put it in the chat. I've got the chat up. If somebody has a problem.

Now, we have three sets of interpreters. In case people aren't aware. We have ASL interpretation. We have BSL interpretation. And we have JSL interpretation. That is American Sign Language, British Sign Language, and Japanese Sign Language. Japanese Sign Language is paid by the courtesy of the Japanese speakers. We thank them very much for that.

So I want to welcome all of you. I hope this will go well. It's an experiment, in a way. Thank you, Gent, very much for sorting everything out for us. Thank you, everybody, for your patience.

So I want you to, if you have the agenda in front of you, to have a look at it and see if there's ‑‑ everything is okay for you or you need to make a change or a comment. You have two seconds to respond, she said wickedly.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Hi, Andrea, this is Kaoru.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Please.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: In the chat box from Erich. Are there not remote moderator for written contributions in the text chat? Or just reading them out?

>> ANDREA SAKS: No. Not officially. But we can do that, if we take a few minutes to ‑‑ if that's what you need, we will get that done. I will keep an eye on that. I have that. At the moment ‑‑ maybe I'll just quickly do it. Go quickly right now and do that.

Okay. There are questions about any other Zoom session I could pin, why not here? That's from Olaf Middlestadt and Christopher Vogler from the United States says hi, everyone. I think, Olaf, we've kind of had a problem with that. I can't really answer you. We'll sort that out later.

Masahito says hi, Christian. In the gallery mode, you can grab and move videos to the preferred places, says Matjaz.

Then there's Lidia saying hello to everyone. Then there's a remote moderator for written contributions in the chat ‑‑ that's your question, Erich. Erich, we'll try and not use the chat unless we absolutely have to. I'm keeping an eye on it and I will pause the proceedings, but not during a presentation. Just immediately after. If you have questions about a presentation, please hold on to them or make a note of them and we will handle all questions at the end. Otherwise, we will be derailed from time.

So if that's okay with everybody, silence is golden. That's how we'll do it. Okay. Great.

Right. So we need to have the approval of the agenda and the allocation of documents. I'll just say that one more time. Is that okay with everyone? And nothing in the chat so we're all right. Okay. Kaoru, can you stay where we are when we finish looking at this for everybody? Thank you, Kaoru. Can you go back to where you are? Okay.

Now, do we have ‑‑ now, we have the report of the JCA from the last meeting which was in April 28th. If there are any comments about that, can you hold that until the end unless there's a terrible mistake that you must mention now. Kaoru will scroll through it for you. Thank you, Kaoru.

All I can say is we sure did a lot of work on that meeting. I didn't realize that was so long. Okay. Any comments that need to be made now, or can you hold them until the end? Great. Thank you. We'll carry on. Okay.

Kaoru, if you would put up the agenda. The first speaker is ‑‑ there we go ‑‑ is number 15. Sign avatars. We do have a note saying ‑‑ wait a minute. Let me just move this. A general discussion by the meeting re pros and cons on the issues, re sign language interpretation by signing avatars. With your permission, I'm going to move that until the end of the meeting. So if you have an opinion on this, can you hang on to it until we have our presentation regarding this? Because I want to give every person the chance to speak.

So I'm going to move to Item 15.2. And introduce ‑‑ actually, the introduction will be done by Masahito Kawamori of our next and first speaker. Masahito, over to you.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you, Andrea. Okay. I would like to introduce Professor Inoue. Masayuki Inoue. Of Tsukuba University of Technology. He's an Associate Professor of the Tsukuba University of Technology, as well as he's one of the expert ‑‑ experts of the Expert Group on Technology and Access of the World Federation of the Deaf. And he will be reporting on NHK, the national broadcaster of Japan, provided some avatar‑based sign language interpretation during the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympics. So I'd like to invite Professor Masayuki Inoue to present. Also he kindly provided the sign language interpreters for this session. Professor Inoue, please, the floor is yours.

>> INTERPRETER: Just one moment.

>> MASAYUKI INOUE: Okay. I think we're ready. My apologies for the wait, and I appreciate your patience. As just stated, I am Professor Inoue. It is a pleasure to meet you all to take this opportunity today to talk to you about our experience at the Olympics and Paralympics recently in Tokyo. Related to the use of avatars. That is the topic of today's conversation.

So this is the first time in Tokyo that we have used the avatars, but we have hosted the Olympics. Back in 1994, we did not have an accessible games. So, for example, we did not have interpreting services provision. We did not have captioning. Our first event was not an accessible Olympics. Over 50 years later, we had the opportunity to host the Olympics again. So that has just recently concluded. And we had a vastly different approach to accessibility provision in the most recent Olympics.

Part of that was via NHK, which is one of our broadcasting channels. It is a government TV broadcast channel. And they engaged in some testing to see how sign language interpreting provision could be provided at these Olympics. We did that through the use of avatars. And we wanted it to be automated avatars signing and also automated captioning. So that was at the opening and closing ceremonies, in particular. Doing that via deaf interpreters.

Now, I know my time is limited here today, so this is a fairly superficial conversation for today's purposes. You can certainly get more depth, should you desire that.

So as you can see from the picture behind me, on NHK television, these were the computer‑generated avatars. So this is an example of how they were used. This is in the midst of a basketball game. And whatever the commentators are saying, this signing avatar is providing an interpretation and it also has captions underneath. And this was done live. Again, we tested this in a few locations.

This is players at the Paralympics playing basketball. Again, it's live and you can see the avatar providing signed interpretation on the right‑hand side while the play is under way. So it's interpreting what the commentators are saying about the game. That's how we use the avatars.

Now, with CG avatars, I realize it might be a little difficult to see my screen. I'll just go through some of the pros and cons. And some of the points that we have on the pro column are in comparison to previous iterations of avatar usage. The technology has certainly improved. That means that, for example, finer parameters of the handshapes can be detected. Finer nonmanual signals on the face, eyebrows, mouth movements, and other elements of signed languages could be more easily captured. And all of that is a result of technology improvements.

That said, it's not perfect. And from the test videos I just showed you, when the avatars were performing live, there is some time lag, of course. Of, perhaps, two seconds. So it's not exactly simultaneous. There is always somewhat of a delay. And we found that to be a difficulty.

There were also very limited patterns in terms of sentence structure. But the signing avatars are getting closer to real‑time use and looking more natural and like a live interpreter. A human interpreter.

So from that, we realize there's still a long way to go. And on the screen that I'm showing, you can see a deaf person signing. A signing avatar in the middle. Voice recognition. Then a hearing person who might be engaged in conversation with that deaf person. And the computer generation needs to recognize all of those aspects. So it needs to have voice recognition to go to the signing avatar. And over to the deaf person. And then the reverse. From the deaf person be recognized by the signing avatar, put into a spoken language, so that the hearing person understands their end of the conversation.

So the technology for that interplay is not yet perfected, but that would be how communication in a dialogue format would be affected. That part of the technology is ‑‑ still has some work to do.

On July 1st we started relay services here in Japan. Finally, after quite some effort. And so we're working with that technology as well to see how quickly we can progress. That relay service, we suspect, may have interpreting needs in that and have deaf interpreters in it that can be automatically, perhaps, turned into a spoken language. That might happen through voice recognition and avatars as well.

So we have a variety of issues to consider and pursue as we look at relay service provision and the interplay of avatars and computer generation. Those technologies are still under way, but we look forward to their continuation. Thank you so much for allowing me to contribute today. I appreciate your patience in the beginning of the session. Thank you so much.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, professor. I'm very grateful for you coming and telling us about it because you've had actual practical experience with it. It is not actually widely used in our part of the world. So I hope everyone has a question, they will hold on to it and we can deal with that at the end, as I mentioned.

The next presentation is Item 19 which is I think ‑‑

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Andrea?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: 19 is collaboration, right?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes. That's correct. I was just about to read that.

>> INTERPRETER: An interruption, please, from Christopher Jones.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Go ahead.

>> CHRISTOPHER JONES: I was just changing over between the two difference interpreters. And I missed what was being said. So can you please repeat what was said over the last minute or two?

>> ANDREA SAKS: From the presenter or from what I just said?

>> CHRISTOPER JONES: Just you, Andrea.

>> ANDREA SAKS: That makes a big difference. I said thank you and we're moving on to the next item. Okay. I'm watching three interpreters and trying to figure out who's changing and who's not. Please bear with.

The next item will be ‑‑

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Andrea, if I may, I can just present the video just briefly. So people can see what Professor Inoue was referring to.

>> ANDREA SAKS: We don't have ‑‑

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Oh. Okay. So I can now share. I'll just briefly share it. Is that okay?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yeah, you got it up. Go for it.

>> INTERPRETER: Sorry. A comment from Christopher.

>> CHRISTOPHER JONES: Now everything has gotten messed up. I have four people on screen instead of one.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: That's because of probably the sharing screen.

>> ANDREA SAKS: We'll get it back. Just hang on, Christopher.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: The reason why I did it is because of the copyright issue. We cannot present the video or you cannot get access to the video from outside of Japan. So that's why I wanted to show you a little bit of what the avatar looks like.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Masahito. Now can we get the original screen back? How do we do that?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Don't worry. And, yeah.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you. Great. Okay. Thank you, Masahito.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: My pleasure.

>> CHRISTOPHER JONES: Wait a second. I'm still seeing four people.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Christopher, can you see your interpreter? Kal Newby, can you see her?

>> CHRISTOPHER JONES: I removed a pin and repinned. That's what I've done.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Christopher. We may have to ask you to improvise and do that. As I explained, we've never had three interpreters at one time. Three different languages. I'm going to move on if you're okay.

All right. The next one is WebVRI and that was moved to a different timing. It was going to be later. But it is collaboration with UN‑ESCAP ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on VRI, which is Video Relay Interpretation, and other aspects updates. That will be presented by Masahito Kawamori. Please go ahead.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Okay. Thank you very much. I do not have much update on the collaboration between UN‑ESCAP and ITU Regional Office for Asia‑Pacific on VRI. We're still doing how we can collaborate. I've reported our activity to UN, the United Nations. And reported also the JCA‑AHF activity so that pretty soon I hope we can start something tangible.

While we're working in Asia and the Pacific, the Croatian Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association, has taken up our document for technical paper on the WebVRI and they're now starting their project on the VRI. So I would like to invite Tea Domin and Zdravka Bastijan to present their work supported by the European Union. So, yeah, Zdravka and Tea, hi, yes.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: Hi, thank you, Masahito, for inviting us to this meeting. We'd like to present our collaboration and project on VRI here in Croatia. Croatia Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I can share the screen. Right. You cannot start. Okay.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Yes. Go ahead.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: You'll see the presentation?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: It's coming. It's coming.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: Okay. But my screen froze. So I cannot ‑‑ I can't do anything without it.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Wait. Wait. I'll try to show ‑‑

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: Wait. I can't stop the sharing also.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Can you share it?

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: Not without ‑‑

>> DUSAN CAF: Hi, Masahito. I cannot because I don't have PowerPoint on my computer.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: We unfroze so I will try again. You can see it now?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes, we can see it.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: Okay. Thank you. The Croatian Association of Hard of Hearing is very old association of deaf and hard of hearing. We're celebrating now 100 years of our existence. Gathers 23 basic organizations with over 6,500 members in Croatia. Also we're active participants in legislative and policy initiatives and actions in favor of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Croatia. We're also members of World Federation of the Deaf, European Union of the Deaf, International Federation of Hard of Hearing and European Union of Hard of Hearing.

This year we started project at VRI. We named it a Croatian female name that we gave this platform, VRI, the name ‑‑ help me ‑‑ of ‑‑

>> TEA DOMIN: Name of a famous Croatian deaf artist. We wanted to celebrate deaf persons, in a way. The project concerns all the Deaf and Hard of Hearing sign language users from all of Croatia. Wanted to include improvement of quality of life by providing VRI for them by applying two sign language interpreters that will be available for all language users in Croatia.

>> ZDRAVKA BASTIJAN: It's made in accordance with ITU guidelines and used ITU‑T in Europe guidelines in making this platform. This is how the platform works. We have just a screen shot of the platform. So you can see three persons here. The biggest screen is sign language interpreter. And the others are deaf person which is calling to the sign language interpreter. The third person is a hearing person that gives information. It's a doctor. Or someone else that needs to be translated from sign language to hearing. To voice. To spoken language. Yeah. And this project is from European Social Fund. This project is funded from European Union. The duration of the project is 20 months. But, of course, we hope to prolong it more. Not to just be a project, pilot, but to be a usual activity deaf persons can use any time they can. That's it, right?

We just started it, so the users are satisfied, but we are working on ‑‑ to provide more information about the project, about the platform that more and more ‑‑ more and more deaf persons can use it. Thank you.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Ms. Bastijan. I appreciate your work. We will hold questions for you until the end. Masahito, is there anything you wish to add before I move on?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: No, thank you very much. This is a great opportunity for the Croatian association to start this VRI. And they're hopeful that this will lead to VRS and also especially emergency services so that they can use this kind of video relay service type of service to help deaf and hard of hearing people in Croatia. Yeah, that's my comment.

And also, just make sure that they're using ITU Technical Paper as the basis.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very much, Masahito. This is very good news for the ITU. Again, if there are any questions, we'll have them at the end.

Okay. The next speaker is ‑‑ I'll tell you, we're jumping all over this ‑‑ is, ah, our technical wizard, Mr. Gent Barjami. I'm never going to pronounce his name ‑‑ I just call him Gent. He keeps us together technically. He's helping us now as we speak on our technical aspect.

He has created a presentation regarding our MyMeetings platform. And rather than me explain what it is, Gent, are you ready to go over and speak, please?

>> GENT BARJAMI: Yes. Thank you, Andrea. Thank you, all, for giving me this possibility. And opportunity to present this with you. Let me just quickly share my slide here. Hope you can all see it.

So as Andrea said, my name is Gent Barjami. So I am from the Support and Operation Unit in the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, the telecommunication sector of the ITU. I'm going to be explaining ‑‑

>> INTERPRETER: I'm really sorry to interrupt you. We changed interpreters so we'd have a new interpreter with your presentation, but Christopher wasn't ready.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Sure, no problem.

>> INTERPRETER: For the change of interpreters.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Can you guys ‑‑ wait a minute, can you guys give us a sign, whoever's going to stop and change, say interpreter change out loud then we know? You can just butt in and do it. How's that?

>> GENT BARJAMI: I agree with that. Just let me know when Kayen continue?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Can we go now?

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Yes. Okay. Before explaining what my meeting is, I'm going to start with a bit of a history. As many of you might already know, we used to use Adobe Connect as our main tool to support all ITU‑T Statutory Meetings. But Adobe Connect had some inconveniences. Licensing cost. Audio was not the best. It was quite poor sometimes. And it was really unfriendly. Specifically, the mobile application of it. And it used an out‑of‑date technology, which was Flash.

And most importantly, it did not ‑‑ it was not fully integrated with all of the ITU internal systems. Registration system being one of the most important of them.

So this is why we have to look around and see what we can do to find a tool which will be most appropriate to our needs.

This is how we ended up with building the MyMeetings tool which was introduced in 2019 and produced to replace Adobe Connect for all our Statutory Meetings.

What is MyMeetings? It's an internal application that was built in‑house in ITU which is used for all remote participation in ITU‑T and it uses an open‑source platform called BigBlueButton. Based on web real‑time application which enables web applications to capture and stream audio and video media.

It's completely based in our Geneva headquarters. There's no need to install any applications on your laptops or PCs. As long as you use one of the mentioned browsers here, Chrome or Firefox being recommended ones but also common ones like the new Microsoft Edge. Or Opera. You can use any operating system that you want. So you can use your Microsoft windows. You can use a MacBook. You can use Linus. Even Chromebook. It's fully integrated with our back‑end systems. Specifically, with registration systems. So this means that we can set up sessions that would require prior registration for the meeting. There would be no possibility to forward the details to someone else who is not registered. As long as you're not registered, you won't be able to join meetings for security.

Lastly, this complies with the accessibility, WCAG, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. Also with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act in U.S. which allows companies to make information accessible to people with disabilities.

Key figures quickly. So as I mentioned before, we started using this tool in January 2019. Since March 2020 when the pandemic started, when we had to move fully on virtual mode, all meetings were fully virtual. With MyMeetings, we managed to organize over 150 Statutory Meetings with over 70,000 connections and people connected from over 130 different countries around the world.

So the way you connect is very simple. All you have to do is by using one of the aforementioned browsers, just go to the remote.itu.int site and will present you with a window where you have to put in your ITU number and user account. Once you log in, you'll see a full list of all available meetings also displayed on this slide. By selecting the one you're interested in, all you have to do is click on the join button of that meeting. That's it. You will be joining the meeting in this way.

So right now, I would like to move to the demo side to quickly show you the user interface and features of the tool, itself. I'm going to briefly stop my screen share. And I will share just a browser where I can actually showcase to you how this works.

So as I mentioned, all we have to do is go to remote, and here you're presented with a window where you have to put the user name of your ITU user account. And once you've done that, there you go. This is the main page, the main landing page, of MyMeetings.

Now, many meetings will be listed here. Some of them will be from upcoming days. You can navigate on those and see what's coming up. Or you can see today's meeting. Some of them, as I mentioned, will require registration. So even if I tried to join on some of those meetings, I will not be able to register and it will not allow me to proceed. Asking me to register beforehand.

As you can see, meetings will have an ongoing status, depending if they're now or upcoming. Those meetings will have an upcoming status and will not be able to be joined. The ones that are ongoing, see other details on it like start time to end time. Also the sector and group and time.

For the purposes of this meeting, I created a demo session here. I'm going to click on join. And there we go. So as you can see, the first thing that it will ask you ‑‑ this is a common security thing with any browser that wants to use your microphone, it's going to ask before if you allow them to use the microphone. Of course, we have to say allow. Then you'll be presented with a menu where you can choose actually how you want to join the audio. We have two ways of joining. With your microphone or listen only. Usually, people always ‑‑ participants join with microphone. But if you feel that sometimes you just want to listen or like we say, passive participation, you want to see what's going on in the meeting, it's a simpler way of joining. For this, I'm going to use microphone. There's an echo now, if you can hear. This is a part where I check my microphone. If I hear myself back, I click on okay button and then I'm in.

So this is the platform. On the left side, you'll see a list of users. Everybody who joins the meeting will be listed here. Just on top of it, you have the floor requests. This floor request is linked to the raise hand button that you see here as well. So if I click on the raise hand, you will see that I will be moved to the floor request. So we have made this so that chairs of the meeting or moderators of the meeting can see actually who is requesting the floor and give them the floor appropriately.

Then the same way, you can lower your hand and then you move back to the users list.

Then you have the public chat, you can chat with someone and it's going to be visible for all.

Then on the right side, you have where it says MyMeetings here, if anything is being shared, a document or anything, will it displayed here.

Down here we have an audio settings button to change on the fly your microphone settings, so on.

Also you have other buttons that are useful during the meeting. I mentioned the raise hand. You'll be moved automatically to the floor request queue.

By default, you'll be muted. As you can see also by the red connect by your name. If I mute myself ‑‑ I'm going to mute because of the echo. Then you have also possibility to share your webcam. Here's the same. Will go actually on the right side of the screen. All the webcams will be displayed with a sign.

Also, if there is captioning available, you'll see a button to enable the captioning. We have worked with Caption First actually to embed their captioning automatically. For the purposes of this demo, I haven't been ‑‑ the captioner of this actual meeting. If I click on captioning, I'm proposed with a meeting to choose which text color I want to use. It's white. What background color I want to use. The font. And also the size. And then if I click on start, you will see ‑‑ there, you will see that the captioning will start automatically and will be displayed here for you. The last three lines only because we cannot take more than three lines of the text.

If I stop the captioning, I can move it easily and click back again because if I'm not satisfied with the size, I can increase that. If I don't like the background color, I can change all of this. And start back again. You will see that immediately it's going to be applied. The new settings are going to be applied for me.

Finally, when you want to leave, all you have to do is click on the leave button which will actually bring you back to the main MyMeetings menu.

Before I finish, I'd like to let you know we have a test session which is available at all times in the main landing page of the MyMeetings. We can actually come and just click on it. 24/7. At all times. You can join here and test around and play around with this tool.

So I thank you again for your attention. And, Andrea, I think you said questions will be taken later. Is that correct?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes, that's correct. I want to give everybody the opportunity to speak. And we'll deal with the questions later. Thank you very much, Gent.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Thank you, all. Thank you very much.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. We're going ‑‑

>> INTERPRETER: If we could please pause for the interpreters to switch.

>> ANDREA SAKS: We're just about to announce a break. Bear with me. I know. I want to say thank you very much, interpreters. We're going to take a five‑minute break. And we'll come back, Kaoru, at what time? Kaoru, my clock has stopped.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Sorry?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Four or five I think. Five after 4:00. No, already 7 after 4:00.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Is that what the time is or is what ‑‑

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: In Geneva. The time we will be coming back.

>> ANDREA SAKS: 5 after 4:00. Okay. Sorry, interpreters. Don't worry. I'm thinking about you.

Just a note to Erich, there is not much in the chat box other than logistics on how we're managing the meeting. There is no special communication. I have checked it. So there's nothing really to read out. We will copy it, though, and take it down for you should you like a record.

(Five‑minute break)

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. I think the time is just nine past the hour. Are we okay, interpreters, to carry on? I got a yes from Mark. Is that an okay situation? Okay. Silence means yes to me.

Okay. Here we go. We have been getting questions in the chat box. But mostly, it is just taking care of business on how we're handling the technology that we're using for the meeting. A very good question, just hang on and remind me again toward the end. We want to give everybody a chance to speak.

Okay. So the next question or next session is Question 28 of Study Group 16 and ITU‑T. That's safe listening and accessible health topics. Now, Lidia and Masahito are in charge of that. I presume Lidia will take the lead on that, please. Would you like to ‑‑ am I correct? Lidia, would you like to do that, please? And we'll have to be brief because we will be discussing this again later in the year. In the meetings. So we just need an overview. Go ahead. Lidia, are you there? Masahito, if Lidia is not there, can you do that?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: I can do that. There's two issues. One is the Safe Listening Standard from ITU. We have successfully completed the testing in the last Q28/16 ITU meeting and will be published. It has been published. Now we're asking for ‑‑ asking and also inviting globally the test sites for implementing as well as testing products for Safe Listening devices.

And the second is the accessible town hall recommendation, draft recommendation, that ITU‑T is working with WHO. And we have organized two workshops and also real meetings and we have collected many requirements from the Persons with Disabilities organizations as well as civil societies and we have drafted a pretty good draft recommendation and we're meeting again in two weeks. And we're hopeful that we will be able to propose it for consent very soon. So that we can have the recommendation published by the end of this year so hospitals and medical institutions around the world can provide inclusive and accessible medical care and health care services. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Masahito. The Safe Listening aspect is also in partnership with WHO. Is that correct?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Yes. Both. As I mentioned.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes. Thank you. Just wanted to be clear. Okay. Thank you very much. I think we'll just keep moving on. I've just written to Lidia that she missed it, but I think she's ‑‑ it's difficult to do this. I've just written her a note. She has another place to speak.

What I'm going to do now is to see if anybody from ITU‑D is available to speak on the ITU‑D accessibility projects. We did not get any confirmation, though I was able to speak to Roxanna Whitmore who is the focal point for accessibility in the D sector. But unfortunately, she was on extended home leave and was not able to attend the meeting. So I don't think, unless anybody's there, we will carry on. And if they come on, they can see that they've missed and jump in and ask to speak. Is there anyone there from the D sector?

Right. We're moving on. My brief comment for number 7, which is discussion encouraging joint working collaboration between the three sectors, I suppose I can carry on from where I was. We don't always have good communication. The Accessibility Project started in the T sector. We do have good representation in the R sector which is the radio and satellite sector. And we'll be hearing from somebody shortly about that.

The other situation is that the D sector mainly gives information to the developing countries that are members of the ITU‑D and there is something called ITU‑D Study Group 1, Question 7, which I'm a rapporteur. At a later time, we hope to encourage them to participate in the JCA‑AHF.

The mandate allows us to report on all activities in the ITU. Including from the administration because one hand doesn't always know what the other is doing. And new people come and we do need to see that we start more of a program of educating not only the members, but the staff, on accessibility projects, accessibility awareness, and accessibility methods in doing meetings.

We still have a way to go, but through the JCA, we hope to be able to send out liaisons, when appropriate, to the different groups to help them gain that awareness.

I think that's all I wanted to see about that. If anybody has any questions about that, again, I'll take them at the end.

And the other thing that I'm supposed to talk about, briefly, is TSAG. TSAG is the parent group of the JCA‑AHF. And that's a Telecommunication Standard Authority Group and we answer to them. And there was a meeting in April ‑‑ no, sorry, May 24, 28. We did report ‑‑ sorry, again, it was in April. But, unfortunately, we don't have the document available which is our policy on that. I could not find it. But it basically talks about what we are supposed to do with regard to making our meetings accessible.

And there was a draft, there was a policy report, created by ‑‑ so the Secretary General on accessibility policy for persons with disabilities. And it did use the references that we have passed in the ‑‑ that we have used in the past which is Resolution 175 Rev 2018. The WTDC Resolution 58 which is the D sector that was done in Buenos Aires on the 2017. And the WTSA resolution 70 which was done in 2016.

As you can see, we're a little bit behind. We need to actually update some of these documents and we hope that people when they come to the ITU will come with a view to helping us do that.

I will make sure that this document is posted later. And that we get more collaboration with TSAG that basically works with the operating methods, specifically of the T sector.

So if there's any questions or you would like to participate in this work then, again, at the end of the meeting. Okay?

So we're moving on. Are the ‑‑ we're still all right. Let's see. That takes care of TSAG. We're down to number 9. So that is the JCA webinar that was held. Whoa, this just moved. I'm using the screen. Which was just ‑‑ which was held in May the 4th. Now, we did report on this before. But we hope to be able to participate in this next year ‑‑ I mean this year. The next meeting. But it's for the next year. And we dealt with the accessibility ICTs during the COVID‑19 pandemic.

Am I going too fast? I'm going to take a deep breath. I think I am. I'm going to kill the interpreters, and I don't wish to.

So is Lidia back? Lidia Best, are you back? All right.

>> LIDIA BEST: I am.

>> ANDREA SAKS: You are there. Oh, wonderful. I'm going to give you this job. I took over the one ‑‑ Masahito took over the one when we couldn't find you. Would you like to give that brief overview? In exchange, since I stole yours, you can steal mine. On what happened during ‑‑ what we did with WSIS, please. Masahito also participated. The importance of working with WSIS, please. Lidia?

>> LIDIA BEST: This is ‑‑

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes, we did ‑‑

>> LIDIA BEST: I'm sorry. Do you want me to speak?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes.

>> LIDIA BEST: Okay. Hello, everyone, my name is Lidia Best, and I'm with the JCA‑AHF. Together, Andrea and Masahito, we organized a session on accessibility for persons with disabilities especially with online meetings and remote situations. One of the questions related to the real-time captioning. Discussion of the presentation, especially from Masahito, was around VRI which you had presented today as well by one of the presenters. And we generally try to bring understanding of the challenges persons with disabilities continue to have in pandemic time.

So the recording is available and you can check on the website of the JCA‑AHF. The recording as well as our presentation. So please do so. We really welcome your feedback. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Lidia. And the next one is, if you can comment on the next, which is IGF, Internet Governance Forum and the dynamic coalition on accessibility and disability updates, please. So keep talking. Thank you.

>> LIDIA BEST: Okay. Thank you, Andrea. So we, DCAD, the and the Internet Governance Forum, DCAD will have a session in Poland. The International Internet Governance Forum is holding the event in Poland for their annual meeting which will be hybrid. So some of the presenters will be remotely. Some will be in person. The session, if I am correct, because there were some changes, 7th of December. Closer to the date, information will be shared and more information about how we're going to run the event.

Also, for everyone who's interested in the work of DCAD, we still do not have one single coordinator. And at the moment, we continue with the coordinating team just of three. Members. Myself, Peta Crosby, and Julie. And people who are part of the group as well. There's quite a few of them.

In meantime, since our last meeting for the DCAD. So only the Internet Governance Forum is bringing up a new website and working directly with DCAD and other members to make sure that website is as accessible as possible. Hopefully it will be a showcase of organizations.

Much of the funding is actually from the UK. And countries support it. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Lidia. For those of you not familiar with IGF, the Internet Governance Forum is one of the UN bodies. I mean, it's directly responsible to the UN. And it created Dynamic Coalitions on every subject you can possibly imagine, from the libraries, the weather, whatever. We created DCAD. We were unable to continue supporting DCAD due to the fact that there was no funding given by the T sector on it. So we turned it over to a different group which is ‑‑ who has continued with it. The name that you mentioned didn't come across. It's Judith Hellerstein. H‑e‑l‑l‑e‑r‑s‑t‑e‑i‑n. And if you wish to participate in the IGF in the next meeting or, again, let us know and we'll put you in touch with the correct people.

Have I covered that okay for you, Lidia?

>> LIDIA BEST: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very much. Now, we're still okay on time. Now, this ‑‑ the next event is for Erich Kofmel. And I believe we have a special presentation. Kaoru, are you ready for that particular aspect that we have to do? We have a sound presentation. Is that correct, Kaoru?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Yes. I'm now starting.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you.

>> ERICH KOFMEL: Thank you, Andrea. Autistic persons, leadership in public affairs, are held back by persistent systemic barriers stemming from the pre‑COVID‑19 period but massively reinforced and exacerbated during the pandemic.

The protective measures imposed by governments the world over have resulted in new and additional barriers for persons with disabilities and silence of self‑advocates in public.

The post‑COVID‑19 world is shaping up to be less inclusive and less accessible to most of us. Autistic Minority International has reduced its participation in UN activities greatly over the past year. As many of the short‑form virtual events now put on seem further and further detached from autistic persons' life realities and far removed from the urgency of our daily struggles.

We quickly learned the valuable lessons about inaccessibility and non inclusivity of virtual UN conferences such as the 2020 high‑level political forum on sustainable development.

For example, 11,000 people from around the world participated in a virtual global technical meeting held over four days. A year later, almost 50,000 people autistic participate in the three‑day virtual Generation Equality Forum led by UN Women at the government of France this summer. This is not meaningful participation. In most virtual events now, no one gets to speak who is not a carefully selected invited speaker. The UN organizers set the agenda agree the outcomes and there's no way any attendee can raise objections or highlight overlooked issues by making an oral statement from the floor.

The UN has become an echo chamber having further shrunk civil society space and eliminated any challenging public discourse. Participants now are just an audience and treated as such. UN staff knows to approach virtual events such as webinars as if they were producing TV programming or infomercials for UN Rep TV or YouTube.

Many civil society events have become equally one‑directional with way too many invited speakers to allow for any meaningful interaction with other attendees.

We are particularly discouraged by how disempowering and inaccessible most of these virtual events feel because of new technological barriers.

At the HOPF, it was extraordinarily noticeable thanks to the sheer mass of events happening in parallel over ten days. There are multiple videoconferencing platforms employed across the conference. Each event and session organizer configured the platform they were utilizing differently, enabling and disabling technological features in a stunningly random fashion so it was never possible to get used to anything.

Autistic people tend to like routine and don't like change and this was constant change. The total lack of predictability makes virtual events especially at the scale of the Conference of states to the HLPF a cognitive nightmare.

Even during an HLPF side event of the state holder group of Persons with Disabilities, the chat function for autistic people who cannot speak was turned off. Other organizers of UN and civil society found a myriad of ways to set up and handle Q&A boxes, almost all confounding and cognitively inaccessible.

Moderators kept instructing attendees to use functions that weren't there for non-speakers. Instead of organizers being able to switch off features that would make virtual events more accessible to particular disability constituencies, participants should be put in control and have the power to personalize what the meeting looks like and how it functions for them.

Worse, however, through ten days of the HLPF, we did not get to ask a single question on the record as part of the proceedings of many of the parallel events. Never mind making a statement anywhere. Activity was largely limited to polls. Participation like that seems futile and a misnomer.

This ill‑conceived development is interlinked with and aggravated by another. The mandatory wearing of face masks at the UN, seemingly even more persons with disabilities in possession of a medical or psychiatric dispensation.

Masks are required in all indoor common areas on the premises including conference rooms. Similar rules apply in New York. The UN does not communicate any exemptions from the mask mandate. Even if it did, my dispensation is not in English and might not be recognized by UN security.

As masks are unlikely to be abolished fully for a long time, regardless of whether someone is vaccinated, this will prevent the return of numerous persons with disabilities unable to wear them including many autistic self‑advocates to the UN for in‑person, hybrid meetings and conferences, such as sessions of the Human Rights Treaties party resuming in Geneva from September.

Being excluded from participating in physical UN events for the foreseeable future means that we remain relegated to remote participation, if available, and in particular, virtual UN and civil society events which have proven inaccessible to many of us over the past 18 months.

All of this conspires to keep the voices of autistic persons and others with disabilities muzzled at the UN and beyond, Whilst the COVID‑19 pandemic is still raging on and many of us wear and are suffering in silence and isolation.

Mask mandates force people with disabilities ‑‑ passive attendance at virtual events can never be a substitute for full and equal participation and technological inaccessibility prevents even that.

However, to exclude and discriminate against persons with disabilities unable to wear a face mask is a choice the UN has to make. It is a highly political choice. It is creating new barriers that technology is not able to overcome. The same is true at the local and national levels.

As autistic self‑advocates, our leadership at this moment demands that we raise an issue, however unpopular it may turn out to be.

The UN must ask on masks and institute and communicate an exemption from wearing a face mask on UN premises for persons with disabilities holding a medical or psychiatric dispensation, even if it is not in English, and national and local governments must guarantee that persons in need of a dispensation are able to obtain it and won't be harassed for using it.

The UN has missed the opportunity to make virtual and hybrid meetings and conferences, an improvement in terms of real access and participation. Instead, developments in 2020 and 2021 have exacerbated the flaws of in‑person events, restricting civil society space even further.

We call on the ITU to develop separate guidelines and standards for virtual meetings that go beyond technological accessibility for remote participation by viewing virtual events in a holistic manner with regard to inclusiveness, interactivity, and full and equal participation of the diversity of persons with disabilities.

Virtual meetings are here to stay and the ITU should have started this work more than a year ago. It will be much harder now to undo the bad habits that have already encroached on every aspect of virtual events at the UN and beyond. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Erich, for your recorded presentation. I know you're listening to what I'm saying. And reading the chat. I'm reading the ‑‑ I will read the chat to you.

What I am going to propose for the moment ‑‑ this is a very complicated topic ‑‑ is to take a break so the interpreters can have a break. Because that was pretty intense.

So we'll come back in five minutes. Kaoru, what time is that?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: 4:35. So we can still continue, I think.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Well, no, the interpreters need a break. They wrote to me in the chat.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Oh, okay. Sorry. So five minutes?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes. I presume five minutes is okay. So we will come back at, what is it, 2:40. Is that okay? Is that right? Kaoru?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Yes.

>> ANDREA SAKS: 2:40, we come back at 2:40? Let's give them a bit of a break. Because that was intense. Thank you, interpreters, for that.

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you, Andrea.

(Five‑minute break)

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. I think it's time to come back. Thank you very much for your patience for the extra break here. Again, that was a very interesting presentation by Erich Kofmel. I'm constantly learning about other disabilities. So we will have a discussion later on that.

The next speaker is a person new to us. Just going to ‑‑ and that is Rosario. I'm going to say this wrong. Forgive me. Galarza. Who is part of ‑‑ and I think one of the major forces of the International Disability Alliance. Are you there, Rosario? I see you. You've turned your camera on. Okay. Would you like to go ahead and present ‑‑ there, we've got your presentation up. If you want to have the slides changed, just say and Kaoru will do that.

So, please, would you go ahead and give your presentation. Thank you.

>> ROSARIO GALARZA: Thank you, Andrea, and thank you, Lidia, for inviting me to participate in this important meeting. My name is Rosario Galarza, International Sectionalities Officer.

Going to my presentation. We're going to talk about Accessibility in the Generation Equality Forum.

Next slide, please. First, background about International Disability Alliance. We are an alliance of networks. International Disability Alliance brings together over 1,100 organizations of persons with disabilities and their families from across eight global and six regional networks.

We promote inclusion of persons with disabilities across global efforts to advance human rights and sustainable development. We support organizations of persons with disabilities to hold their governments to account and advocate for change locally, nationally, and internationally.

With member organizations around the world, IDA represents the estimated 1 billion people worldwide living with disabilities. Among them are some of the world's largest and most frequently overlooked marginalized groups. That are underrepresented. With its unique composition, including the foremost international disability rights organizations, IDA is considered by the United Nations System as the most authoritative representation of persons with disabilities on the global level.

Next slide, please. We are talking now about the letter ‑‑ the submission of one letter. Joint letter. This submission was a joint effort led by first International Disability Alliance then the European Disability Forum, EDF, which is also member of IDA. Then Women Enabled International, WEI.

And this letter was disseminated and circulated through the following mailing list. Was endorsed by 219 organizations and individuals. And some of these organizations are as follows. International Foundation for Electoral Systems. National Forum of Women with Disabilities. Sightsavers. And the Inclusive Generation Equality Collective.

Next slide, please. Why we are submitting this letter? Because, I mean, the GEF, the most important global gathering for gender equality of the century so far, must include all persons willing to advance gender equality including those with disabilities. However, disability‑related and other forms of accessibility were not prioritized by the organizers of the GEF. As a result of this, many women leaders with disabilities around the world were left out or excluded to participate in the GEF.

Women and girls with disabilities are 19.6% of the world's women, making us a significant portion of the population that the GEF needs to consider.

Even if we were a smaller group, there would be no excuse for us to be excluded because no one should be left behind. The Paris Forum was a particularly inaccessible space and the virtual platform was used for the forum without accessibility in mind and without consultation with women with disabilities.

Next, please. We have identified a lot of barriers, but now we are going to talk about four specific barriers that we have found in this forum. First, lack of simultaneous closed captioning, CART. Because the platform used for the Paris Forum did not allow for the integration of CART which is essential to ensure the full and effective participation for persons who are deaf, deafblind, hard‑of‑hearing persons, and persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, as well as those who are unfamiliar with different accents.

Also I would like to add for persons who live or work in a noisy place.

The other barriers we have identified is the lack of International Sign interpretation. Because International Sign interpretation was only provided during the opening and closing ceremonies. And one specific event related to women with disabilities.

At this point, we are, it seems, to be segregated because only specific events for women with disabilities that they're providing International Sign interpretation.

The other barrier we identified is screen reader inaccessibility. The website for the Forum platform was hard to navigate with or without the screen readers. And was not available beforehand for attendees to maybe do a test or become familiar with its features, despite what had been announced.

And finally, the accessibility of information. Because information regarding the Forum was not provided in easy‑to‑read or plain language. The content delivered in many events had a complex language. Speeches were quickly delivered and there was no chance to ask questions to clarify information. This prevented the effective and meaningful participation of many women and girls with disabilities. Particularly, women with intellectual disabilities, women with developmental disabilities, but also for indigenous women with disabilities who English is not their primary language.

I would like to add that definitely these barriers are ‑‑ rights of persons with disabilities, specifically ‑‑ but also accessibility is more than one article. It's one principle. It's a precondition to enjoy, exercise the right of persons with disabilities. Thank you so much.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Rosario. I'm absolutely delighted that you're here. We're going to talk some more. You really also ‑‑ I'm going to hook you up with the D sector also.

What I need to do is we're going to I think ‑‑ I'm not sure where we are. We don't need a break just yet. Are the interpreters okay? Fantastic. We'll keep going. Thank you, again. We'll have a discussion on this. And you took me back in time. I'm really pleased that you made this presentation about women. Thank you.

Right. Now, an old friend is next. And that is Gerry Ellis. Gerry Ellis is blind. But he can see more than most people. And we've worked with Gerry for many years. And I have not had him on one of my panels for a very long time. So I'm really looking forward to his presentation. Gerry, over to you.

>> GERRY ELLIS: Good afternoon, everybody, from a pleasant Dublin. Moving into autumn. Quite pleasant weather. Many of you already know me. Some of you do not. I'll very quickly introduce myself. I'm a blind person living in Dublin. I worked in technology in a bank in Dublin for over 40 years but recently retired. I'm a Vice Chairman of JCA‑AHF but haven't been active for a couple years. I have retired recently. So I hope to change that.

I just wanted to talk today about a few issues that I would like to say JCA take on. I don't have specific proposals and specific actions. But I do hope that we can over the next number of meetings start to bring these onboard.

The first thing I mentioned in my title of what I want to say was vision impairment. And two things about that. It's the language. And language is becoming increasingly important. 30, 40, years ago, the idea of saying somebody was a blind person was almost offensive because it was seen as putting the blindness first and the person second. And a lot of people like Judy Fulman, and John DeCamp and many more fought to have person‑first language. You had a person with a disability rather than a disabled person, or whatever. That's the language you'll find in the United Nations convention and language you'll find in many international standards and international education. That's beginning to move back again. Disabled people are now beginning to say, we're disabled by society. And the only issue I have with that is some people are saying the only people who may speak are those who use disabled‑first language. I say everyone should be able to speak regardless of their language. It's just something to watch out for.

The second thing I mentioned was standardization. ITU for as long as I've known it has been wonderful in the area of standardization and technical documents and so on. But it is quite strongly leaning toward deafness and hard‑of‑hearing issues. And I'd like to see it again widened out a little. Maybe toward visually impaired issues and various other issues. And a couple things that come to my mind immediately are way finding which is massive now. Every second week, you find a new way finding app. Some of them work inside and don't work outside. Some of them work outside, don't work inside. Some of them required just software. Some them required hardware. Like you might have to wear a belt around your belly. Or there's one from Japan and one from Dublin that I know of which operate on ‑‑ have devices in your shoes or whatever.

But there doesn't seem to be a standard to try and bring these together. Particularly, bringing together the two worlds of indoor way finding and outdoor way finding. And that's something I think ITU can do a lot of work on.

I also would like to see ITU coordinate a lot of its international standardization work with other standardization buddies. And because I've been away for a while, that has been happening, but I'm not sure how well it has been happening. So I'd like to look at that.

For instance, because I come from Europe, I just mentioned the new European Accessibility Act which is going to require three new standards and changing three other existing major standards. And just to make sure the ITU is in line.

And the last thing I want to mention just before me, ROsario from the International Disability Alliance talked about wonderful stuff that they were doing around gender equality. The IDA is also leading an initiative called We the 15. That's W‑e t‑h‑e 15. It's one big term. That's the name of the initiative. It plans to be a ten‑year global initiative to promote the meeting of the needs of the largest minority in the world. That is people with disabilities. Thank you, Andrea, and to everyone for listening.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Welcome back. You haven't changed. I'm glad you're going to come back and help us. Your contributions have been wonderful in the past. You bringing out certain issues regarding the fact we need to bring a better light on persons with disabilities' needs and civil rights. Thank you.

So we're going to ‑‑ again, I'm checking with the interpreters. Are you guys okay? Tell me. Yep. I see yes. Okay. You guys are troopers. Okay. Thank you very much. We are now ‑‑ oh, where are we? Right, right, right.

Now, Lidia, are you there? Lidia Best?

>> LIDIA BEST: Yes, I am.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Right. You're on next, kid. You have the subject of captioning. I know you have a lot to say about automatic captioning, which is the title of your subject. Would you like to take over, please? And give us a bit of your thoughts. Thank you.

>> LIDIA BEST: Thank you. So welcome back, everyone. As the person who is using captioning extensively all the time, and especially in online meetings, what we are seeing at the European Federation of Hard of Hearing and all of our organizations who feedback to us, that sometimes hard‑of‑hearing people and deafened people are faced with no choice. We are using automatic ‑‑ meeting organizers are using automatic captioning for many reasons. Without actually involving the persons with disabilities who use the services to understand when we can use it and when we cannot use it.

So, for example, automatic captioning in online platform is used in a small meeting where everybody is using, for example, additional tools to add to the context, should the context be ‑‑ it is fine. It's up to the person to also agree to it. And to decide if they can manage it or cannot manage it. And it can work really well. I'm using it quite often in this way. But when it comes to meetings where there's a number of participants in events and different actions are being used, and Rosario has presented it very well, what we are talking about when we discuss the captioning. It is important that actually organizers understand at the moment we are using automatic captioning and the captioning cannot convey the message as it should have, as with hearing people can understand it. Meaningful participation of this person is to longer there. I think this is something what we need to work out and we need to discuss further and raise awareness. Because it's too often we are left in a situation when we have to just accept it. We can't just have any influence on what type of assistive support is given to us. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Lidia, thank you. We've had ‑‑ I just want to say very quickly, you and I ‑‑ I'm hard of hearing later in life. You have been hard of hearing when you were relatively a young woman. And one of the things we do is we do use automatic captioning in our one‑to‑one calls because we can't use the phone in a normal way. But the laughs that we have had together about how our voices are translated by automatic captioning has been horrendously scary if you think that this would be used for a meeting like this. So thank you very much for that. We hope to do some more work in ITU about standardization or guidelines about when we should use automatic captioning and when we need to use a person.

We are using a person for this meeting. We are using Caption First. I'm not sure who our captioner is by name. But they have been with the ITU since 2007. So we wouldn't dare use automatic captioning for a meeting like this. It just wouldn't work.

Thank you very much, Lidia.

Now, we're back to the next session here. We're still doing ‑‑ we're doing pretty good. We're going to have enough time to have some conversation.

Now, the next person I have is ‑‑ now, is Seth Bravin on the line and Relay Service? Is Seth there? Or Christian Vogler.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Sorry, Andrea, the next presenter is Brian.

>> ANDREA SAKS: That's what I need you for. Being dyslexic is so much fun. Brian, forgive me. Are you there?

>> BRIAN COPSEY: Not all here, but the voice is.

>> ANDREA SAKS: You and I being the elder statespeople here, you forgive me, I know. Would you like ‑‑ I'm going to let you do both your presentations. One right after the other. We'll take a break just a minute to check with the captioner ‑‑ with the sign language interpreters if they can handle that after your specific first presentation, which is ‑‑ cybersecurity and potential issues for persons with disabilities and specific needs. Brian, the floor is yours.

>> BRIAN COPSEY: Thank you very much, Andrea, and good afternoon or good day depending on the part of the world. Basically, I'm a simple radio engineer working within a number of standardization organizations. Primarily Europe. And working with some of the legislation which European Commission is putting together.

I've become concerned not that the European Commission is necessarily being unreasonable, but the impact on those with disabilities and words here are meant to cover people getting on in life.

The objective of having cybersecurity on devices is a relatively new concept. Currently, cybersecurity is usually limited to large networks, telecommunications, computer systems, and so on and so forth.

We're now talking in terms of looking at cybersecurity to be able to place equipment on the European market which comes down to an opener, or any other form of wearable.

In principle, this is wonderful. In practice, the issues of those who have less than dexterous fingers, good hearing or other issues have not been considered in the run‑up to this work.

I've put together some examples in this. By no means they are the only ones. And I'm looking here at principles as opposed to detail.

We also have problems with things like smart meters and 5G which the commission which to include. On the face of it, it doesn't sound as though it will affect people. It will if you have to start putting in passwords, as one example, each time you want to use something.

This morning, I was part of a group which was discussing the standards mandate. I had to point out that things like hearing aids do not have keyboards. You cannot have hearing ‑‑ cannot have various forms of password. When we start looking at the devices that are being covered, it is anything that can be connected directly, or indirectly, to the Internet. So using hearing aids or cochlear implants is one example, but there are many others.

In my case, certainly, I can talk through my hearing aids, through my mobile phone, to the Internet. I can also talk to my bank. I can also talk to various forms of organization where I will pay money from a credit card or from another source to that company.

So the issue of voiceless personal data is one which I'm currently struggling with.

And from the point of view more of devices, when we start looking at mobile phones and apps, the problem becomes quite large.

There is also a requirement for manufacturers to be secure by design, which in principle sounds wonderful, but in the past until this morning, this was always taken as meaning you had to put the maximum into the device. If you want to be slightly ridiculous, a nuclear power station may cost $10 million to make secure from cyber attack. Under the original wording, your door opener or curtain puller or any of the other things you use would possibly have had to have the same level. I'm exaggerating slightly, but I would like people to be able to consider this and to have a discussion possibly at the next meeting in order to identify what we feel could be done about this.

My personal thoughts are given the expertise within this group and ITU, we should be considering guidelines, information. I don't mind what we call it. On the best way to ensure access to those with various forms of disability in order that people are not deliberatively disadvantaged.

Of course, the other minor problem is any increase in things like security will undoubtedly increase the price of devices.

I'll stop at that point for any questions. I hope the document has given you the background and my words the importance that I feel this has to us. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Brian. I've had a message from one set of interpreters that they would like a little bit of a break, which we're going to do. Can you hang on and give your second presentation after that break? Are you still okay for time?

>> BRIAN COPSEY: I'm okay until about 20 past. I fully appreciate the work that the interpreters are doing. I wish them a happy break. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very much. And we also ‑‑ Seth is also going to be a bit later.

Okay. We will come back in ‑‑ I think we can manage to take a break for five minutes as well. If that's okay with everybody. So Kaoru, when are we coming back? Because my clock still doesn't work. Perfect.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: I think I just have ‑‑

>> Thank you.

(Five‑minute break)

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. I believe we're back. I love it when the screen flashes on. I'm going to ‑‑ Brian Copsey has to leave in about five minutes. He's a fast talker. And he has one more paper to present. Which I'm going to just quickly turn it over to him so you don't have to listen to me.

So, please go ahead, Brian.

>> BRIAN COPSEY: Thank you very much, again, Andrea. There was a second issue which has come up recently. The idea that AI or Artificial Intelligence was the main point of science fiction for many years going back into the 1930s, even.

However, in recent years, it has become a much greater item in our lives. In many cases, we haven't necessarily appreciated it.

And when we look for a definition of AI, there isn't one which is comprehensive. Thus, the discussions which the European Commission have started on these issues, because aside from the technical issues, there are a whole range of moral and other issues which will affect the citizens of the world, not just the European Commission.

So when we start looking at definitions, if you think in terms of your broadcast radio receiver, many have a self‑tuning function which goes through the frequency range, identifies the station, in many cases it tells you what a station is in digits or voice. And as such, can be considered an AI device.

The discussions on AI were fascinating because of the very wide range of items that this covers. But if we consider a range of medical devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, of course, they are AI devices because of the way that they sample sound or do other functions and provide the user with the output of that.

I don't wish to repeat everything I've said before, but I would suggest that either we have a special session at the next meeting to discuss these issues after you've had an opportunity to look at them. And, again, we have to educate, inform, the legislators and standardization groups around the world that there are issues which need to be taken into account in order that citizens are not disadvantaged. I'll stop at that point for any questions. Happy to help wherever necessary.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Because you have to leave in about two or three minutes, I'm going to allow anyone to ask a question after you. Could you just raise your hand if you have a question for Brian regarding Artificial Intelligence or cybersecurity needs. Just before, if I see anybody doing that, which I don't at the moment, I just want to say which meeting were you thinking of? Question 26?

>> BRIAN COPSEY: No, your next meeting.

>> ANDREA SAKS: The next JCA meeting. Okay. Got it. Any questions for Brian? Well, Brian, thank you very much. And I'll have some questions, but we'll deal with that later. I won't take the time to ask them now. Thank you very much, Brian, for popping in in your busy schedule.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Lidia there's a message in the chat box.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Oh, there is. Right. Where? Will you read it out, please?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Question 26 of the Study Group 16 already has a work item in AI.

>> ANDREA SAKS: That was from Masahito Kawamori. Did you take care ‑‑ did you see that, Brian?

>> BRIAN COPSEY: No, I didn't. If it's possible to have a link to that work, I would really appreciate it. Because I don't wish to recreate the wheel in the European area. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. We'll make sure you get a link to that, Brian. Kaoru and I will send it to you or Masahito will. We'll get that sorted out. Thank you, Masahito. Thank you, Kaoru. Okay. We're covered.

All right. I've ‑‑ the next situation is I have had a communication from Seth. If he ‑‑ he's in another meeting. If he cannot make this meeting at this moment, then Christian will pop in first. Is Seth available at the moment? Or are we having Christian first? Seth is from Sprint Relay. And Christopher Vogler is from Gallaudet University. Who's going first, gentlemen?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Seth's ready.

>> ANDREA SAKS: I'm sorry?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Seth first.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you.

>> INTERPRETER: Can we just pause while the ASL interpreters switch? Sorry.

>> ANDREA SAKS: One second. We're going to pause.

>> SETH BRAVIN: Can everyone see me okay? Sure, no problem. I can wait.

>> ANDREA SAKS: We'll just wait for one minute. BSL, tell us when you're okay.

>> INTERPRETER: Christopher Jones says, yes, he can see Kal Newby on screen. Good to go. Thank you.

>> SETH BRAVIN: Fantastic. Good to see everyone. Hope everyone is well. I'm going to make this brief. We have a full agenda today. Thanks to everyone who has given their presentation thus far.

I just wanted to give a quick update on the status of Relay Services during the pandemic.

Here in the United States, and everywhere, we've seen a sharp increase in Relay Services since March of 2020. And this includes all types of Relay Services and these are for different reasons. Deaf and hard‑of‑hearing people are now working remotely like everyone else. They are using Relay Services for health‑related reasons. They also have had more time to talk with friends and family on the phone instead of meeting in person.

So the Federal Communications Commission or the FCC have regulations. They are the regulatory body in the United States. They have been extremely proactive since the start of the pandemic. And they have issued a temporary waivers and they have recently extended the waivers again. So it started in March of 2020 and it will continue until December of this year.

The first waiver is the pace of how fast an operator needs to answer the call. So 85% needs to be within 5 seconds. And that's on a daily basis. That's been extended to 85% of the calls need to be answered within 120 seconds. And that's now measured on a monthly basis. So it gives the operators a lot more flexibility.

The second waiver gives relay providers more flexibility to deal with the reduction in staffing and allowed operators and interpreters to work from home.

The third waiver for video relay service providers is that they're allowing them now to work with contractors. Who can provide ASL interpreters part time. So before they used to all have to be full time.

And the waivers that I've mentioned are all temporary. So we are seeing the call volumes and the length of calls starting to go down to normal levels as people get back to real life and their normal routines pre‑pandemic.

So, thank you. Hope to see you all in person very soon.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Seth. That gives us a good idea of what's going on in the USA for Relay Services. I truly appreciate that. And I hope you will contribute to the next JCA and Question 26 of Study Group 16 on this subject. Because it's important that the community understands what's going on in the U.S. re relay because you're the standard bearers of Relay Services in the world. Thank you, Seth.

Now, I have Christopher Vogler from Gallaudet University. Gallaudet for those who are not familiar is the only deaf university in the United States and in the world. Christopher, I mean, Christian, sorry. Do you want to ‑‑ do you have something ‑‑ we don't have a title for you. So, please, would you like to speak?

>> CHRISTIAN VOGLER: Thank you, I would. Nice to see you here, Andrea. I'm happy to be here with you all. Wish it were face to face, but, perhaps, one day soon we can resume that format. Meanwhile, virtual.

For my presentation, I will likewise be succinct and I want to address a couple of particular issues that are occurring here in the United States.

First of all is the idea of captioned telephone services. And the second part of that is video relay service. So that will be my contribution today.

Where captioned telephone services are concerned, it is a hot topic in the United States at the moment. There have been myriad changes of late. The last two years, in particular. And looking at the rationale for those changes has been about switching to ASR, Automated Speech Recognition. We are seeing that technology rapidly increasing.

And there are some new services with ASR focusing on the automated side and eliminating the human‑provided service. So that's a concern.

We've seen what some of the providers are doing, which has typically been human captioners in the IPCTS arena. And when it's human providers, then an application goes from an entity who'd like to provide the service to the FCC. At the moment, we're also seeing applications for ASR to be included in that CapTel delivery. And that's partly because the frequency of calls is rapidly increasing, courtesy of the pandemic. And that means that oftentimes, human captioners are not available. The humans are at capacity and there are meetings and events that cannot be appropriately captioned. Those meetings are sometimes being diverted to ASR as the delivery format.

Now just yesterday, the FCC gave approval to the first traditional CTS provider to provide ASR as part of its repertoire. We expect other providers to follow suit in applying and providing ASR as well.

There are a couple of things to emphasize in this. For deaf and hard‑of‑hearing people, as the end users, we absolutely must be given choices around ASR versus human delivery methods. We definitely require those choices that must be part of the parameters.

And so if a provider provides that option and I start a call and it's ASR to begin with and it's ineffective, I should be able to switch within that call to a human provider. Now, some providers are saying they will provide that service, and others are saying that that feature will not be part of their repertoire. Which means a caller who uses the ASR finds it to be ineffective would have to disconnect, hang up, and re‑call, to get a human provider. That's ineffective and it's not an appropriate way to manage those calls. We need that in‑call switch ability to be part of the consideration.

Some of the other concerns we're seeing arising is the FCC is making decisions on how to pay for this. It's typically paid on a per‑minute basis. And the rate per minute has dropped in recent times. Again, that brings up a concern. When the rate drops, it can't support human service delivery. So, again, that has the end users concerned about this switch to ASR and the funding going to that endeavor rather than to humans, leaving the users without appropriate choices. So we are looking at what the implications of that would be with human providers versus ASR and the funding decisions that the FCC is currently making. So that's a concern.

And I'll just make some brief remarks about video relay services. VRS. We have been somewhat surprised to see a new application submitted to the FCC to provide VRS by a company named Tive. T‑i‑v‑e.

The deaf community has very little awareness of who this enterprise might be. We don't know the people who are behind it. We don't know the company, whether it has any deaf‑led or deaf‑centered approaches to VRS. They certainly don't seem to be connected to the community.

So, many of us have read through the applications. Gone through what the application says. What they've said they'll provide. And, again, we have some concerns about what Tive is doing. It seems, for example, they're asking to be automatically waived from some of the requirements as a new enterprise. So that's a bother. That's a big red flag for many of us that we need to keep an eye on. So we're able to respond with comments to the FCC in relation to the Tive application. So that will be part of our concerns in that they've asked for waiver were even being approved.

So in a nutshell, that's some thoughts on the American scene. What's been happening here of late. I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution. Andrea, thank you. Back to you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Christian. These are all very interesting. I have the complete captioning. This is all going to provide us a lot of work to do. Because all of you may or may not know, the JCA is an overview. We can't write a standard here. But we can write a standard in Question 28. Question 26. And we can do something about some of these problems that are occurring and make a noise. Thank you for letting us know what your noise needs to be.

Now, right, the next person I have did a presentation to Study Group 2. It's called Stir, Shaken, and Relay Services. His name is Chris Drake. He has been communicating with people in the U.S. and are you online? Are you with us, Chris?

>> CHRIS DRAKE: I am here, Andrea.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Great. Thank you. Oh, there you are. Now I know what you look like. And, all right. Would you please give your presentation? Do you have some slides?

>> CHRIS DRAKE: I do. I can share those. I just want to ask, do you want me on video or would that be confusing with the signers?

>> ANDREA SAKS: I think it would be confusing with the signers.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: No problem.

>> ANDREA SAKS: That would be lovely if you would just ‑‑ you have a nice voice.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. We need our signers. Thank you. Okay. Please go ahead.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Okay. Can you see this screen now?

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yes.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Very good. I will put it in full screen mode, if that would be helpful. Come on. Okay. So I am the Chief Technology Officer at iconectiv. We have a unique combination of roles in the U.S. industry to be both the Internet, telephone, relay service database administrator which manages the routes to all the relay services which may be captioning or signing. And we're also the trust authority that manages the Stir/shaken environment for call authentication. So I'm going to talk about how those two come together and what are some important factors there.

Okay. I'm really going to focus on two slides. The wordy ones I'll pass by quickly. The others just to leave you with that artifact that you can look at more closely offline.

So first of all, what are the implications to relay services in a world of Stir and Shaken? First of all, I want to be clear that there was a more detailed presentation on Stir/Shaken at Study Group 2 which Andrea will make available to the JCA‑AHF participants. That's something you might want to look at afterwards.

But in a nutshell, Stir/Shaken is call authentication. It was designed to be able to separate the illegal robo calls that may be spoofing their calling line identity, which you might call caller ID, and the cases where there's intent to do harm. Right? It's legal in the U.S. to spoof your caller ID unless you're doing it with intent to do harm. Just to be clear. Which might include fraud, impersonating another person. Deceit. Whatever that might be.

Voice service providers that deploy call authentication have to attest to the authenticity of the CLI, the calling party number in all that they support including relay calls if they receive them. That's an important factor.

Call authentication I will make a little bit more clear. It's essentially attesting to information about the calling party using a digital signature.

So relay services, whether they be signing or captioning or something else for voice service accessibility, is a case of legitimate CLI spoofing. There is no intent to do harm. There should be the ability to set that CLI according to the caller who may be a person of disability and that that should not be disadvantaged in a world of call authentication.

Determining the attestation level for the calling party info is based on Shaken guidelines which is a standard. Also the local policy of the originating voice service provider. So they will decide how they apply the guideline and what confidence they have in attesting to the authenticity of the calling party number. Okay?

Let's move on to this, very quickly. If a picture's worth a thousand words, Shaken is where voice service providers basically receive a call, sign the level of authenticity, full, partial, or unknown, and send that to the network which may end up in a fashion displayed as an authentic calling party number or not on the terminating device.

If there's a relay provider as per this picture, then the calling party is upstream of that and the relay provider is ideally sending that calling party's number as the CLI. If there's a call back, it would go to the correct party.

Now, the carrier, OSP as we call them, Originating Service Provider, is the one to attest to the authenticity of that calling party number behind the relay provider.

Very quickly, there are three possibilities in attestation. Full means I know the customer and I know they can use this number. B is I know the customer, I don't know they can use this number. C is I don't really know anything. Neither the customer nor their right to the number. Which we euphemistically call a gateway level attestation.

Okay. So the main slide here is what are the alternatives for relay services in a world of Stir and Shaken? There are basically three approaches that may be taken. The first one ‑‑ and, of course, I just want to be clear. The goal is to give a full attestation, A as you saw on the last page, to all these legitimately spoofed calls that a person of hearing challenge makes through a relay service. They should get fully attested call authentication of their calling party number.

So first approach, the relay provider may, in fact, qualify to be a signer in their own right if they meet the eligibility criteria and then can have a Shaken certificate. iconectiv is the administrator of the eligibility criteria and enforcement point. So we process all these applications and we award basically cryptographic tokens to those who qualify. They use those to get certificates to sign calls. More information is at this link provided.

The second approach, there's a concept called a delegate certificate where the carrier, the originating carrier who owns the number, may give a certificate of theirs, sub‑certificate, subordinate certificate, to the relay service who may then sign their own calls under what is referred to as a delegate certificate.

However, every service provider who owns a number that would be used as the caller ID must delegate a certificate to the relay provider. And given a relay provider supports the entire country and there are over 1,000, even 2,000 service providers there in the United States, they would potentially need all 1,000 to 2,000 to delegate them a certificate. This is not a small task.

So number 2, possible, but not probably very practical in the near term.

Number 3 is where the relay provider makes arrangement with the originating service provider they're using who will put their call into the PSTN, the right caller party. The level of attestation that that service provider will support for the relay provider is a matter of local policy. Bearing in mind that when they sign a call, this originating service provider is accountable for having attested to it at whatever level they choose to do that.

So these things on the prior page that relate to the criteria for using a full A attestation versus a partial B or an unknown C, those require a policy at the service provider for how they would tell the difference between A, B, and C in a way that is reliable. In a way that could be defensible in the event that a calling party complained and still had a fully authentic indication of the call. I think you can follow that sensitivity there.

So this is probably the most practical approach because as long as there's a policy for the relay provider, to know that the number that they are using as caller ID for their subscriber, that person who may be hearing challenged, is authentic, they can make contractual arrangements with their carrier to only send them such authentic caller IDs and that they attest ‑‑ they know they're authentic. In which case, the carrier can choose to rely upon the contract and potential consequences therein, if there's violations, and agree to provide a fully attested call. This should be done with every carrier that a relay provider may originate on. Maybe often would be a single provider and this would be straightforward. But potentially given nationwide coverage, there might be a multiple number.

The last thing I want to say about this is we are seeing ‑‑ if I could use that expression, there's an app for that. We are seeing in a growth of mobile apps ‑‑ and I think that relates to some of the prior agenda items on relay services. Mobile apps that provide relay services to subscribers are generally run over the top, which means they're not integrated with the telephone network the way traditional relay services are.

If you use an over‑the‑top app and terminate into the public network, at some point you are bringing that call into the network with a caller ID. But you have lost the originating service provider concept here. You're almost certainly connecting at the terminating or intermediary. And they usually would not know anything about the authenticity of calls you're making. Because you're over the top. So this is a little more complicated.

Two days ago, we had such a mobile app surface in the Shaken standards body asking how they can get their calls attested to. And this is going to start, I think, a dialogue where the mobile app over‑the‑top approach gets better attention and solutions emerge from that. At this point, I'd say it's so different than in‑network relay providers that there's more to come on that particular use case.

And that's all I was going to present, Andrea. There are some backup slides, again, as people may want to look at some level of technical information.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very much, Chris. I want the original presentation as well as what you've given me here. We will make them available with your permission.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Absolutely.

>> ANDREA SAKS: I'm very grateful that you took the time out to speak with us. Because I think we're going to probably ask you to be involved with us a bit more. Especially with ‑‑ I don't know if you knew Seth Bravin or Christopher Vogler, but they're in the U.S. So I'll make sure you're in touch and they're in touch with you.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Very good. It's the first I have come to know them. So that would be appreciated.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Well, they're my heavy‑duty guys. And I ‑‑ you're going to become one, too. I really appreciate the fact you took the time. And I'm learning. Believe me. I'm learning.

>> CHRIS DRAKE: Very good. My pleasure.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Now, I have one speaker I've got to go to then we might have some time for questions. So what ‑‑ is Grigory Milorado there?

>> GRIGORY MILORADO: Yes, I'm here.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Oh, good. Would you like to give your presentation? I'm sorry to make you the last, but I think that worked out better for you at the time. So, please, your title is ‑‑ where is it? Global Cross Border Across Relay and All Forms of Assistive Telecommunications. Status Work on the International Numbering Resources for Provisions of Services of a Humanitarian nature Study Group 2 and Study Group 16 Update. Thank you very much. Go ahead.

>> GRIGORY MILORADO: Thank you, Andrea. Good evening, my colleagues, very nice to be among you here. I'll be very brief. Very interesting to learn from the previous speakers on the relay services. As it is evidenced, the same problem can be extrapolated to the whole world. As in the majority of countries, there are no relay services. And basically, the same problems that are reported and that are started and solved in the U.S. and UK and other countries where relay services exist. All the same problems will, obviously, appear in the ‑‑ for the users in the countries where there are no relay services.

So we basically consider that ITU‑T should develop approaches on how we all together could globalize access to relay service and to generally assistive telecommunications from any country for any person who needs assistance. Calling to any other country, any other person. Or to a platform like Zoom or like a platform like MyMeetings.

So generally, we should be working on how the function ‑‑ how this could function. The global cross‑border access to assistive telecommunications. Because it is generally the right of persons with disabilities for choice. Choice of provider. Providers. And for persons without disabilities who use, it is normal, choice is normal. They use platforms like Messenger, platforms like Zoom. Those platforms operate from other countries. Most users use them cross‑border without any reference to what country it is.

So generally, this same should work for PTSN and IT and all integrated together. This is what we suggested in the draft new recommendation, FACC recommendation, FACC humanitarian, which exactly is titled Cross Border Access to Assistive Telecommunications. New baseline text of this recommendation. We hope that Question 26 of Study Group 16 will progress this work rapidly and also in coordination with Study Group 2 because it becomes more and more evident that for globalizing access to assistive telecommunications, humanitarian, global, resources is needed for global services that will be enable such globalization.

So in our proposal, we have introduced the necessity of global humanitarian assistance hubs that would exactly deal with the problematic of quality, of spoofing, of how to route the calls. How to enable a person from country A to use the service from country B with being financially provided for and for all payments and cross‑border enumerations, et cetera. This is big work. This topic is important and big. It would be great, the collective effort of all of us here, progress this work as quickly as possible. And highest quality of this work possible. Thank you very much. I'm very glad if you write to me directly and progress on this work. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very much, Grigory. It looks like this is a very topical issue that we have to pursue. And I hate to warn you guys, we got nine minutes.

Now, I'm very tempted to do the liaisons, but Study Group 9, do we have a representative from Study Group 9? Ah. We don't. Kaoru, can we do the liaisons by email so we can allow people to raise their hand and actually have a few questions for speakers within the nine minutes?

And also, we don't know when we're going to have the next meeting because it's impossible to actually know. But just to point out, there are future events planned. And that is between Study Group 9, Question 11, which has ramifications. Study Group 9 is cable TV. And Study Group 16 and Question 26 which is the accessibility question for the ITU. And Study Group 16 and Question 28 which is the health question and has a lot of information regarding people's health issues and also works in safe listening with WHO. So there are future events that are going to be happening. So I'm not ‑‑ Kaoru, your advice, please. Can we answer those liaison by mail?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Yes, of course.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Right. All right. Floor's open, kids. Everybody who wants ‑‑ we have eight minutes. If you want to talk, ask a question, please raise your hand and we'll take them in order of when you've raised them.

Is everybody not going to let me do this? Masahito Kawamori, please go ahead. You've raised your hand.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Yeah. Okay. Thank you. My name is Masahito Kawamori. On behalf of Professor Inoue, I'd like to mention that VRI is not available outside of Japan. I'll try to get some graphics as well as possibly video. And avatar from NHK and work with Professor Inoue to provide more information.

Also IRG AVA is interested in this issue. I think we can have an opportunity to do so in the future.

Also I put some links to the potential video clips that might work in your country as well. So please check. That's about Professor Inoue's presentation.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Masahito. Just for clarification, IRG AVA is the Intersector Rapporteur group on audio/visual accessibility which is the two different sectors of the ITU. The ITU‑R radio and satellite sector which handles also broadcasting. And the ITU‑T sector which does Question 26 and Question 28 and does accessibility and Study Group 16 is the lead Study Group on accessibility. So is that correct, Masahito?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Yes.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you. We have another hand up. Lidia Best. Please go ahead.

>> LIDIA BEST: Thank you, Andrea. I have a question. One question with regard to TSAG and the accessibility statement. We haven't seen the document with the agenda. It's quite difficult to know if the accessibility statement also covers access to sound for hard‑of‑hearing people in the meetings, the actual physical meetings. So at the moment, when we visit ITU, we cannot, for example, request hearing ‑‑ personal hearing globes. Is this something TSAG is interested ‑‑

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Lidia. LidiA, since the JCA is, in fact, under TSAG which is the parent group and TSAG controls ‑‑ one step down from the TSAG team which is member driven which is in control of all study groups, I have seen that document and I tried like heck to find it. What I propose to do with Kaoru's help, we will send it out. It's a very good document. It says we ought to get what we ought to have. And it deals with primarily the work in ITU. Only in the T sector, but it does reflect the possible extension to the R sector radio and satellite and to the D sector, which is the development sector of developing countries. So I'm taking that ‑‑ Kaoru is probably taking notes as she wonderfully does.

By the way, I want to take this opportunity while I'm still yakking to thank Kaoru Mizuno who's our secretariat, Gent Barjami who spoke earlier today on MyMeetings who also is in charge of this technical extravaganza that I think has worked very well. We have never done so many interpreters. And I want to thank the captioner who has been faithfully recording everything that we have said.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Andrea, I have another comment.

>> ANDREA SAKS: All right. I won't forget you. I want to get this done. I've done my job. Yes, of course, you can have the floor. And I want to also thank the sign language interpreters for everything that they have done. And that they have been very graciously trying to help me give them breaks. Hang in there, captioners, hang in there, captioners and sign language interpretation people.

Now, Masahito ‑‑

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: I have a comment to Gerry's ‑‑

>> ANDREA SAKS: Go.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: ‑‑ representation. ITU Question 26 Study Group 16 is also dedicated to providing recommendations for visually impaired people and blind people. And we do have ITU‑T recommendation, F.921 which is audio based indoor and outdoor navigation. And we also have other visually impaired people initiated recommendations. So please go to the website of SG‑16, Question 26. We do have recommendations for blind people and visually impaired people. And they are proposed by the blind communities. So that's my point.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you. And Gerry, you can bug me and I can put you in touch with those people directly. And we welcome you back in the world of giving us a wonderfully hard time.

Now, does anybody else have any questions? Did I miss anybody?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Hey, Andrea, this is Kaoru. I have a reminder. Because we have the two questions to Gent, Gent's presentation in the chat, so but I don't think Gent is still around. I will share these two questions ‑‑

>> GENT BARJAMI: I am here.

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Okay. Great.

>> ANDREA SAKS: The question ‑‑

>> GENT BARJAMI: I didn't want to interrupt. I can't raise my hand I'm a host. That's why I couldn't. I wanted to interrupt. I have them as well. I've written them on a slide. I wanted to ask Andrea, do we have time to go through these questions or do you want me to answer them by mail? I can do it whichever way it's most convenient.

>> ANDREA SAKS: You are our tech guy. And so is Kaoru. Can we stay on for an extra five minutes? Can we? Interpreters and captioners, are you okay with that?

>> INTERPRETER: Sure, yep, can do five more minutes.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Okay. Interpreter, yep, sure. Okay. Go I ahead, Gent.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Thank you very much. Actually, maybe it's less than five minutes. So I have a couple questions from Cleb, how will I do when I can't use microphone, I can't use adjusted audio, how to override. This is concerning my meetings. So if I understand correctly the question, you can actually ‑‑ the users of the microphone. You can just use ‑‑ avoid all the testing and adjustment of the audio or you can ‑‑ you can still join the audio, the meeting, without any audio. I hope this answers your question.

Next question was concerning the three lines of captioning which is not sufficient in all situations. And if there's a possibility to use a separate screen with captioning. Yes, I agree with you. Since we are using ‑‑ this is a web‑based so we're limited in area. So we have decided to use only the last ‑‑ to show only the last three lines of captioning. However, this does not stop you from opening another web browser or another tab on the browser then open the captioning as we're doing it today here. So this is pretty similar to what we have now in Zoom. You can see in Zoom, you can enable the embedded captioning with two lines only. But you can also have it on a separate web page.

Did you test it with deaf participants? Actually, we haven't had yet really a chance to test it properly with deaf participants. I know that Andrea was with us through all these years. Also Lidia. I've seen them participating in some meetings, in my meetings. And I think also Christopher was connected once or twice in the tool. So, but this does not mean I'm more than happy and ready to have a test with all of you guys. I think Andrea, we on the last meeting decided to go ahead with this. But, of course, I'm still waiting for more. I'm more than happy to have a test session with all of you guys. Whoever's interested. So we can go and test and get your feedback on the tool so we can improve it even more.

Can we have three different sign language interpreters on the screen? Yes, it can be done similarly to what we have on Zoom so they can be shown at the same time on the right side of the screen.

A couple questions from Grigory Milorado, accessibility of MyMeetings. Comment more. As I mentioned, MyMeetings is based completely on an open‑source platform that's available for all of you, by the way. BigBlueButton. We have not developed this from scratch. We've taken a tool that exists. We've added, modified it a bit, so it applies to our needs. And, obviously, without ‑‑ with keeping all the accessibility that has been developed. So the whole community works on this. And they are the ones who have developed this tool based on compliance with this tool, accessibility tools as I mentioned before. If more information is needed about this, what I can do is I will just paste the link that you can check on ‑‑ I just pasted it here on the chat so you can have more information on how the accessibility is implemented in BigBlueButton.

Also the last one I think is on the integration of number‑based calls into the session. Unfortunately, we do not have this option. At least for the time being. So MyMeetings uses only voiceover IP calling. There's a possibility, if needed, to integrate number‑based calls.

So there you call. Four minutes. Okay. So I hope I answered all the questions. Feel free to, again, contact me. I don't know if you have my email. I'm going to put also my email here just in case. And so you can contact me at any time. For anything. Thank you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Gent, thank you for that. Anybody who wants to get in touch with Gent and is having difficulty, just write to Kaoru or myself. We will make sure you're hooked up. Thank you, Gent, for offering yourself.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Thank you very much.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you for this presentation and thank you for this other little bit of this wonderful information.

Is there anybody else that needs to have the floor before we close? Right. It will just be me. I have the full captioning. Kaoru and I will do a report together. We will try and get another JCA meeting. If you have suggestions on the subjects you would like to see promoted and discussed. This was a complete overview. Three hours is not enough. But that's what we were given because of budget constraints and time constraints.

So we'll do more. And if you want more, write us and tell us that you want more of these conversations. This is an important aspect of getting members to tell us what they want and need.

Anybody else want to say anything? And I want to also thank Kaoru very much for helping us get this together. Without her, this would not happen, Kaoru. Thank you. Because this is dyslexic can't even spell her name properly half the time. Thank you very much, Kaoru.

Any other business? We'll let you know the next date of the JCA. And we'll do a Doodle poll or something like that. Kaoru, do you want to say anything?

>> KAORU MIZUNO: Thank you very much for your all hard work and thank you very much for all the speakers, all the participants. Of course, all sign language interpreters and the captioner. Without all of your assistance, help, and active involvement, we could not do this successful meeting. Thank you very much.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you very doing that. And I loved seeing all my captioners with their wonderful faces ‑‑ they're my captioners ‑‑ I mean, and my sign language interpreters. I don't know who our captioner is. Who is she? Or he? Who is captioning for us? Please type.

(Abbi)

So I can say thank you personally.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: May I suggest something? Maybe we can take a photo shot.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Oh. I don't know how to do that. Kaoru, do you know how to do that?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: I don't know how. Maybe we could stop sharing the screen.

>> GENT BARJAMI: Stop sharing Kaoru and invite everyone to open their cameras. Make sure you're in gallery view to capture everybody.

>> ANDREA SAKS: All right. That's wonderful. Okay. Yay! Oh, how lovely. Oh. Thank you, everyone. You are absolutely wonderful. All the captioners, all the ‑‑ everybody. We've got somebody in Peru. We've got people in Japan. Hi, Gent. I can see you. Hi. Gerry, you can't see me. Listen, with my voice, you can't ever miss me. And where's Sergey? He's not on yet.

Okay. Oh, hi, Masahito. Who's taking the picture?

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Gent.

>> GERRY ELLIS: Cheese.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Cheese. Who's taking the picture?

>> GENT BARJAMI: I'm trying to take as much as possible. But hopefully you guys got some pictures as well. I'll share them afterwards with Kaoru.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Gent. Yeah, we'll put them in the report. I think this has been really ‑‑ I've been so happy to have all of you accept and be on here. This has been fabulous. Thank you. We will do it again. Definitely. Do it again. Thank you for participating. And I ‑‑ gosh, what can I say. Is there anybody else who wants to say anything besides me?

>> GERRY ELLIS: Thanks, everyone.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Thank you, everyone.

>> ANDREA SAKS: All right. We're off in a blaze of dust.

>> Thank you, all, bye‑bye.

>> Thank you. Thanks, everyone. Bye.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Bye‑bye.

>> Bye.

>> CHRISTOPHER JONES: Thank you to everybody. Andrea, Kaoru, et cetera.

>> Thank you, Mark.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Yeah, thank you, Mark.

>> INTERPRETER: Welcome. Nice to see you.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you, Oliver.

>> Take care.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Thank you. Oh, my gosh. This is wonderful watching everybody flash before my eyes. Captioner Abbi, thank you. Thank you, Kaoru.

>> GERRY ELLIS: Take care, Kaoru, take care, Andrea.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Bye‑bye.

>> Bye.

>> ANDREA SAKS: Beat, thank you. We did good, kid. Thank you, Kaoru.

(Meeting concluded at 12:10 P.M. ET)

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