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| **Keywords:** | JCA-AHF; accessibility; report |
| **Abstract:** | This document provides the draft report of JCA-AHF meeting (Virtual Geneva, 28 April 2021). |

Related links:

* [JCA-AHF webpage](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Meeting documents page](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Pages/202104-docs.aspx)

1. Opening of the meeting

The joint JCA-AHF and ITU-T Q26/16 e-meeting was held on 28 April 2021 chaired by Ms Andrea Saks (USA), JCA-AHF Chairman. This meeting was collocated with Q26/16 meeting (25-26 November 2020) which was held also virtually. The first half of the meeting was devoted to finalizing the scheduled Q26/16 work. This document provides the summary of the JCA-AHF part of the meeting only. The list of participants is available on JCA-AHF [Document 432](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc432.docx).

1. Approval of the agenda

The Chairman introduced the draft JCA-AHF meeting agenda and document allocation as contained in JCA-AHF [Document 420](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc420.docx). It was approved by the JCA-AHF.

1. Approval of the last JCA-AHF meeting report

The Chairman introduced the last JCA-AHF meeting (26 November 2020) report (JCA-AHF [Document 419](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2020/Nov%202020%20meeting/JCA-AHF-Doc419.docx)), and it was approved by the JCA-AHF.

# Collaboration with UN-ESCAP and ITU AP-regional office on VRI and other aspects (Masahito Kawamori)

Ms Aiko Akiyama was invited (JCA-AHF [LS53](https://www.itu.int/net/itu-t/ls/ls.aspx?isn=26333)) to introduce UNESCAP and its activities on digital inclusion (presentation slides available in JCA-AHF Document 431).

UNESCAP has its regional initiative called Asian Pacific Decade of Persons with disabilities, and its guiding document is called Incheon Strategy which includes ten goals to “Make the Right Real” for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. One of the goals is Enhance the accessibility and usability of information and communications service, and its two indicators are: 1) Proportion of daily captioning and sign language interpretation of public television news programs; 2) Proportion of accessible and usable public documents and websites that meet international recognized accessibility standards. To implement the goals, ESCAP is working with and assisting their Member States. Many Member States are interested in learning know-how and internationally recognized standards and practices on accessibility.

Mr Kawamori suggested JCA-AHF members to collaborate with ESCAP in technical cooperation activities to support governments in Asia and the Pacific with ITU-T experts on improving digital inclusion, with technical support of VRI using ITU-T standards. He also suggested to gather information with the help of ESCAP on the statistics of official telecom relay services in each country in the region.

The JCA-AHF Chairman appreciated the suggestions, and Ms Akiyama agreed to work together on the suggested areas. As requested by the JCA-AHF Chairman, Mr Kawamori agreed to coordinate on the suggested collaboration, liaising with ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

1. Collaboration with W3C on WebRTC and total conversation, including WebVRI

Mr Shadi Abou-Zahra has been invited by Mr Kawamori, to introduce the Worldwide Web Consortium ([W3C](https://www.w3.org/)) and its accessibility work. The W3C is an international organization that develops web standards. Among their work, they develop Web Realtime communication ([WebRTC](https://www.w3.org/TR/webrtc/)) specification that allows direct browser‑to‑browser communication. For example, teleconferencing platforms could be completely browser‑based rather than based on proprietary software and standards. The W3C works on accessibility within the group called the Web Accessibility Initiative ([WAI](https://www.w3.org/WAI/)) where Mr Abou-Zahra works, focusing on ensuring that the W3C standards have accessibility built into them. Mr Abou-Zahra shared some links via Chatbox:

* [WebRTC Next Version Use Cases](https://www.w3.org/TR/webrtc-nv-use-cases/)
* [WAI News subscription](https://www.w3.org/WAI/news/subscribe/)

Mr Kawamori then explained that ITU-T Technical Paper [FSTP-ACC.WebVRI](https://www.itu.int/pub/publications.aspx?lang=en&parent=T-TUT-FSTP-2020-ACC.WEBVRI) “Guideline on web-based remote sign language interpretation or video remote interpretation (VRI) system” which was approved by ITU-T SG16 in July 2020 refers to WebRTC. This is a set of standard protocols centred on [W3C-WebRTC] that enables P2P sharing of audio and video signals between browsers. Mr Kawamori suggested to collaborate with W3C experts, to exchange ideas, to invite them to help us with the technicalities of the WebRTC standards as well as to work on a potential joint project related to this particular subject. As WebRTC has a good security mechanism, real-time captioning or livestreaming on WebRTC platform would be a good solution for applications, such as a better quality captioning service with video, and the platform would be utilized to realize the [Total Conversation](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/com16/accessibility/Pages/conversation.aspx) concept.

Mr Dušan Caf from Digitas Institute commented that it is important not only to work on the technicality of WebVRI but also to understand how to appropriately frame the legal requirements so as to be utilized by persons with disabilities. As there are different practices and applications used across the world, cooperation and collaboration in this area is important.

Mr Matjaž Debevc from University of Maribor stated that World Federation of the Deaf, specifically Expert Group on Accessibility, welcomed the developments of WebRTC and WebVRI. He expressed their expectation that the technologies should be easy to use and should be usable on all platforms so as to be implemented widely.

Mr Olaf Mittelstaedt from DAISY consortium commented that he knew the technology was utilized for the application for the deafblind running on Smartphones. Mr Mittelstaedt would check with DAISY technical department if they plan to work on standardization on this area.

Mr Kawamori thanked all those who commented and then he suggested to review and comment on the WebRTC Use Case document that Mr Zahra introduced. Mr Kawamori also highlighted that the WebVRI and the WebRTC are not just for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, but also for blind people as well, e.g., like audio description, in the sense of Total Conversation as Mr Mittelstaedt mentioned earlier. Mr Kawamori therefore expressed his idea on expanding the content of the WebVRI Technical Paper in line with the Total Conversation, collecting requirements for audio description, etc.

Ms Lidia Best commented that a lot of discussions on speech-to-text or real-time captioning were going on in UK and concerns about privacy and security were raised. She therefore welcomes the initiative, because it would provide some directions on this area.

1. Report from co-vice Chair activities

Ms Best, co-vice chair of the JCA-AHF, presented JCA-AHF [Document 426](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc426.docx) on Activities report.

Ms Best is a member of the advisory board of G3ict’s [NeuroAbilities program](https://g3ict.org/research_programs/neuroabilities?utm_content=Andrea%20J&utm_source=VerticalResponse&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=Read%20more%20at%20the%20NeuroAbilities%20Program%20page&utm_campaign=Neurotechnologies%20for%20Expressive%20Communication%3A%20Current%20and%20Future%20Considerations%20-%20April%2029%2C%202021), and she moderated a G3ict webinar on 25th February on dedicated to topic “[Cochlear implants – users experience, driver for innovation”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEsPXjwy6PI&t=11s).

**Make Listening Safe Initiative** at ITU-T Q28/16:[HSTP-CONF-H870 "Testing of personal audio systems for compliance with ITU-T H.870](https://www.itu.int/pub/publications.aspx?lang=en&parent=T-TUT-EHT-2021-CONFH870)" was recently approved. The document sets min requirements for manufacturers to be able to claim their devices comply with ITU -T recommendation H.870 [Guidelines for safe listening devices/systems](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-H.870-201808-I).

**Accessible telehealth:** World Health Organisation and International Disability and Development Consortium (WHO- IDDC) held a workshop dedicated to topic of accessible telehealth and need for global recommendations for healthcare providers ([link](https://who.zoom.us/rec/play/SxQnI8UXyp3Q3-ZV0-gvnNYN7dA-n9UqkcQtv1cmj3Bq8MjmKH8IGVdou9ti_eJo2gDT8c32caVquoS6.pLQx0n4yL3E8Rxbc?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=PvRJA66ESRq_n652VI3dPw.1617650177666.8306fa8753dd78ec223cd6abe2b293d8&_x_zm_rhtaid=943)).

A draft standard [F.ACC-TH “Accessibility of telehealth services”](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/dh/202106/Documents/ITU-WHO-Standard-Draft-20210618.pdf?csf=1&e=JieebB) is being developed jointly by ITU-T and WHO.

**IGF DCAD:** Ms Best isthe liaison officer to IGF-DCAD from ITU-T JCA-AHF. IGF is in the process of developing new website and members pf DCAD are invited to provide inputs on accessibility aspects. Mr Peter Crosbie, Ms Judith Hellerstein and Ms Best are temporary caretaker of DCAD after the resignation of Gunela Ms Asbrink, until a new coordinator will have been decided.

# Telecoms Relay Services and need for robust key performance indicators (KPI)

Mr Christopher Jones presented JCA-AHF [Document 428](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc428.docx). The current global pandemic and the need to work remotely including primary health services, has presented serious issues for access to telecoms for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people worldwide. Mr Jones explained examples of impacts around telecom relay services from countries. He suggested to organise a workshop dedicated to the topic of developing robust accessible telecoms framework with national coverage, which includes a range of relay services, mainly VRS, captioned telephony ( CTRS) and text relay, which provides equitable access to telecoms, providing a choice for the range of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing who have different needs and requirements.

Mr Christian Vogler explained a challenge in US, as FCC has been paying the relay services per minute for their services, but it doesn’t matter what kind of relay services they are providing, regardless ASR or human-assisted captioning. Consequently, providers are struggling to figure out how to maintain their provision of human-based services while the price for relay services has gone down. The consumers and consumer advocate organizations are fighting to make sure not to go to ASR. Competition is important, but regulatory framework to support the market environment is also important.

The JCA-AHF Chairman suggested to discuss this topic at the next JCA-AHF meeting which would be standalone with much more time, and agreed to consider to organize an event collaborating with ITU-D to discuss the topic.

# Direct streaming to hearing devices (Lidia Best)

Ms Best presented JCA-AHF [Document 427](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc427.docx). She explained new devices that are enabled with ASHA (Audio Streaming to Hearing Aids) and discusses need for improvement in range of ASHA enabled Android devices and improvements in the information provided at the point of sale.

In addition, she also pointed that end-users’ screens of virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom being used for this JCA-AHF meeting, cannot be controlled appropriately to show what each user needs. She suggested to consider this issue in the next version of [FSTP-ACC-RemPart (2015)](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC) - Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all.

Mr Vogler wrote in the chat: “Some Google Pixel phones are quite affordable, FYI. But longer term it’s worth noting that neither Made-for-iPhone nor ASHA are actual technical standards - they are proprietary extensions. In the near to medium-term future, it’s critical to track LE Audio, which is an actual standard and has support for hearing devices.”

Mr Matjaž Debevc wrote in the chat box: useful info at <https://source.android.com/devices/bluetooth/asha>

The presentation was noted by the JCA-AHF.

# Incoming Liaison Statements

The JCA-AHF Chairman invited the JCA-AHF members to read the Incoming Liaison below. All Liaisons below are for information to the JCA-AHF.

# LS on establishment of a new ITU-T Focus Group on Artificial Intelligence for Natural Disaster Management (FG-AI4NDM) and first meeting (Virtual, 15-17 March 2021) [from ITU-T SG2] (JCA-AHF [Document 421](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc421.docx))

# LS on invitation to provide inputs to the roadmap of AI activities for natural disaster management [from FG-AI4NDM] (JCA-AHF [Document 422](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc422.docx))

# LS on Suggested revision of the IRG-AVA Terms of Reference (ToR) [from IRG-AVA] (JCA-AHF [Document 423](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc423.zip))

# LS on Draft ITU-T Recommendation J.acc-us-prof "Common user profile format for audiovisual content" [from IRG-AVA] (JCA-AHF [Document 424](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc424.zip))

## LS on the status of work on international numbering resources for the provision of services of a humanitarian nature (JCA-AHF [Document 429](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf/Documents/docs-2021/April/JCA-AHF-Doc429.docx))

## Future activities

The JCA-AHF Chairman encouraged the JCA-AHF members to participate in planned accessibility events including, but not limited to:

- JCA-AHF webinar on [**Accessible ICT during the Covid-19 Pandemic**](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/414) at WSIS Forum 2021, 4 May 2021 at 15:00 – 16:00 (CEST) Recording is available [here](https://itu.zoom.us/rec/share/njG7iYHZVRPKakNd56rRnK8l7c6HTUBQ7BpQQG8Dy-2qPm6cMpL9YLLzSMFXuBS8.Jnufbk4rYAVbtmjT?startTime=1620133247000). Presentation slides are posted on the JCA-AHF top page.

1. Any Other Business and Next JCA-AHF meeting

To be decided and announced accordingly. The JCA-AHF Chairman requested to have a standalone meeting with a longer duration. This will be considered when the next meeting will be prepared.

1. Closing

The JCA-AHF Chairman thanked all speakers of the meeting, participants, SL interpreters, captioner and TSB. She closed the meeting.

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