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| INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION | **Joint Coordination Activity  On Accessibility and Human Factors** |
| **TELECOMMUNICATIONSTANDARDIZATION SECTOR**STUDY PERIOD 2013-2016 | **Doc 239**  |
| **English only****Original: English** |
| Source: | World Federation of the Deaf, SignVideo UK, Vice Chair of JCA-AHF |
| Title: | Promotion to add a section to the F. Relay document and/or to modify the Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing have access to the telephone via their appropriate relay service |

1. **Background**

Currently there are not that many relay services throughout the world even with highly developed countries like Switzerland and the UK. Beat Kleeb of Switzerland, Jeff McWhinney of UK and Christopher Jones of UK have been campaigning for adding more than one type of relay service to the current approved relay service. Beat has been campaigning for several years with the Swiss OFCOM to include VRS alongside with their current Text Relay in three languages. Jeff and Christopher have been campaigning for VRS and Captioned Telephone Relay Service as approved relay services since 2003 to be added to the current Text Relay.

Likewise deaf people in Canada have spent several years campaigning for the inclusion of VRS to their existing Text relay.

Beat as WFD representative made it clear that with the UNCRPD, different types of relay services is a “requirement”.

ITU-D produced an important document “Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report” (<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Documents/ICT%20Accessibility%20Policy%20Report.pdf>) which mentions relay services several times.

1. **Promotion**

It makes a lot of sense if we say that each country (state) should implement at least 3 types of relay services (Text Relay, VRS and Captioned Telephone Relay) within 5 years of the implementation of the first type of relay service? The deaf and hard of hearing communities isn't a homogeneous grouping with identical relay service access requirement and therefore different relay services are required and not to do this indicates a form of favouritism of one section at the expense of the others.

This may not be possible as it is a political statement? The idea behind this is to stop or reduce drastically the amount of time deaf people campaigning for either starting a relay service subsequently to add three more types within 5 years and for countries that already have an approved relay service to add further different types of relay services. This is especially to states that have signed and ratified the UNCRPD.

How best can we write a new section in the F.Relay document which will be a Recommendation to link this to the Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report? Or it will need a link to the Model ICT Accessibility Report to the F.Relay document? The Model ICT Accessibility Report needs an addendum or modified to include the following:-

Can the new Section say something like this?

To ensure that the heterogeneous grouping of deaf and hard of hearing people have access to the telephone with appropriate relay service that meets their needs. Each state is encouraged to provide at least a Text Relay, a VRS and a Captioned Telephone Relay within a reasonable time of 5 years since the implementation of the first type relay service. Several references to relay services can be found in the “Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report” <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Documents/ICT%20Accessibility%20Policy%20Report.pdf>

1. **Conclusion**

Once the insertion of the new section and/or an addendum or modification of the Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report is done, this will enable deaf and hard of hearing to negotiate with their respective governments and/or Regulators to provide deaf and hard of hearing with equitable access to the telephone through the appropriate type of relay services that meets their needs. Specifically in state that have signed and ratified the UNCRPD.

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