

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY AFRICA

Minutes of the CSSR4Africa Team Meeting

Date and Time: November 10, 2025
Venue: Room C210.
Status: Draft.

Participants

Assane Gueye
Birhanu Shimelis Girma
Clifford Onyonka, Chairman
Deogratus Kiggude
Muhammed Danso
Richard Muhirwa
Tsegazeab Tefferi
Yohannes Haile

Apologies

Ibrahim Jimoh

Clifford Onyonka welcomed the participants to the meeting and the Committee members then discussed all the items of the meeting agenda. Tsegazeab took the minutes. The discussions of the meeting are summarized below.

1. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The participants reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on November 3, 2025 and approved them as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

Agenda item 1: Update D6.1 with new enhancements

Action: Not done. See Action item 1

Agenda item 2: Updating the installation manual

Action: Done.

Agenda item 3: Updating TextToSpeech unit tests to print informational

Action: Not done. See Action item 2

Agenda item 4: Updating robotNavigation to print informational messages

Action: Done.

Agenda item 5: Write the new ROS2 software engineering standards

Action: Not done. See Action item 3

Agenda item 6: Write the ROS2 software installation manual

Action: Not done. See Action item 4

3. Matters arising from progress reports.

Clifford noted that some reports have been submitted later than Friday evenings. He and Professor Assane emphasized the importance of submitting reports on time.

Clifford also mentioned that the shotgun microphone has arrived. However, to mount it on the robot, a 3D-printed design is required. At present, while the microphone is connected to the Jetson as it would be in the final setup, it has not yet been physically mounted on the robot.

4. Status of tasks, deliverables, and software.

Clifford reported that all work is on track and no issues were identified. The team agreed.

5. Status of milestones.

Professor Assane emphasized that, regardless of the current status of the nodes or the amount of progress made during the week, it would be ideal to hold a demo every Friday. He noted that this practice would allow the team to visualize progress, identify issues more quickly, and better observe how the nodes coordinate and interact with one another. See Action Item 5

6. Storage and presentation of ROS2 and DEC robotics software and documents.

Following the discussion from the last meeting and further exchanges over email with Professor Vernon, it was decided that the CSSR4Africa repository website should host only resources directly related to the core project, as defined in the work plan. Consequently, resources related to the migration to ROS 2 and documentation for the DEC tour will require a separate repository. To that end, it has been agreed that a new GitHub page, tentatively titled *Robotics CMU Africa*, will be created to store all other documents, code, deliverables, and related resources.

7. Redesign of the AI and Robotics page on the CMU-Africa website

Professor Vernon had also noted that the 'AI & Robotics' page on the CMU-Africa website is both sparse in content and outdated. Professor Assane mentioned that the website is managed by Hannah Diorio-Toth, the Communications Director, and that Deogratius will reach out to her to discuss the situation and determine the next steps. See Action Item 6

8. Updating PI contacts on CSSR4Africa documents and the software repository

Clifford mentioned that the contact information on the CSSR4Africa website is outdated, as Professor Assane is now the current PI. He will take on the task of updating this information on the website. See Action item 7

9. Behavior tree failure handling

Clifford mentioned that the discussion on failure handling had stalled. Tsegazeab, who had been assigned the task of drafting the report, explained that the report was initially sent to the team for review and, after receiving feedback, resubmitted with the suggested additions. However, no further discussions or interest followed, and the document has since remained inactive. Professor Assane suggested that the document be uploaded to Overleaf and shared with the team for further review. See Action item 8

10. Any other business.

Mid semester Review:

As part of the mid-semester review, each team member provided feedback on the progress of the nodes for which they are responsible. The key outcomes of the discussion were as follows:

- By the end of the semester, the goal is to have a fully functional conversational robot in English, incorporating the enhancements outlined in Deliverable D6.2.
- Since migration to ROS 2 is considered desirable but not critical, work on it will be deferred until higher-priority tasks are completed.
- In response to a challenge encountered during the development of an Amharic chatbot in one of the Upanzi projects, Professor Assane mentioned that he has tasked the AI team, or any interested members, with beginning ideation on creating a language model natively developed for African languages. It was noted that such a model would be highly beneficial in enabling the robot to converse fully in Kinyarwanda, and not just in English, especially since the current path toward that goal remains unclear.

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday November 17, 2025 in C210 at 10AM CAT.

End of the Meeting

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Action items following the meeting of the CSSR4Africa project

| Action | Action description | Responsible | Completion date |
|---------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Update D6.1 with new enhancements | M. Danso | November 14, 2025 |
| 2 | Updating TextToSpeech unit tests to print informational | R. Muhirwa | November 13, 2025 |
| 3 | Write the new ROS2 software engineering standards | Y. Haile | November 13, 2025 |
| 4 | Write the ROS2 software installation manual | M. Danso | November 21, 2025 |
| 5 | Friday Demo showing the progress so far | Team | November 14, 2025 |
| 6 | Contact Hannah regarding updating the CMU-Africa Website | D. Kiggude | November 14, 2025 |
| 7 | Update the PI contact information on the CSSR4Africa website | C. Onyonka | November 14, 2025 |
| 8 | Upload the Failure Handling document on Overleaf and share it with the team | T. Tefferi | November 14, 2025 |

Table 1: Action Items