

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY AFRICA

Minutes of the CSSR4Africa Team Meeting

Date and Time: 3rd February 2026, at 11:00am
Venue: Room No. C210.
Status: Draft.

Participants

Clifford Onyonka
Lenah Chacha
Moise Busogi
Muhammed Danso
Muhirwa Richard
Tsegazeab Tefferi, Chairman
Yohannes Haile

Guests

David Vernon

Apologies

Birhanu Shimelis Girma
Deogratius Kigudde
Ibrahim Jimoh

1. Introduction and review of agenda

The chairman, Tsegazeab Tefferi, welcomed all the present members to the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The participants reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th January 2026 and approved them as a true and accurate record of the meeting. It was, however, noted that Afretec is misspelt in the minutes (AfreTech is used, which is a misspelling).

Agenda item 1: Richard to send a brief on tasks planned for the next 4-6 months

Action: Done

Agenda item 2: Tsegazeab to add new milestones for each paper with their respective deadline dates to the milestone document

Action: Done

Agenda item 3: Tsegazeab to add Kinyarwanda conversation system milestone to the milestone document

Action: Done

Agenda item 4: Prof Moise to speak with Wakanda AI team regarding Kinyarwanda TTS, STT, and LLM collaboration

Action: Done, and the collaboration is ongoing with respective team members

Agenda item 5: Tsegazeab to add receptionist scenario to the milestones document

Action: Not yet done

Agenda item 6: Tsegazeab to share cultural knowledge base document with team members

Action: Done

3. Matters arising from progress reports

There were no matters arising from progress reports.

4. Status of tasks, deliverables and software

All team members should use the CSSR4Africa GitHub repository, publishing the latest working versions of their work to a branch on the repository.

5. Status of milestones

Tsegazeab has already updated the milestones document based on discussions from the last previous meeting.

6. Values in the Cultural Knowledge Base

All members are to go through a culture knowledge document shared earlier on by Tsegazeab and prioritise the culture knowledge that is to be implemented based on the time remaining for the project to be completed.

7. The case for proprietary models

In case proprietary models such as those provided by OpenAI and Google are used, then its best to target speech-to-speech models rather than replicating the model cascade (ASR+LLM+TTS) used with the open source models currently being used for CSSR4Africa. This means that CSSR4Africa's architecture needs to be updated to accommodate this change, and the team postponed the discussions on how to perform this system architecture update to a future undecided time and date. It was also decided that we need to first try Gemini models as the school has already facilitated access by CMU staff, faculty and students to these models. A need to speak to CMU-Africa members who have already worked with these models was also noted, as well as the need to provide a disclaimer to visitors that their voices will be uploaded to external servers when they interact with Pepper.

8. Any Other Business

CSSR4Africa ROSAS evaluations

It was agreed to begin preparations for these evaluations as soon as possible. For this, a minimal set of cultural knowledge needs to be already implemented, and there may be need to reduce workload by shedding off unnecessary work so as to finish all tasks needed to perform these evaluations.

Culturally Sensitive Social Robotics for Africa paper

The publisher, Springer, will release the book that contains this paper on 15th March 2026, about a month later than earlier communicated.

Set up camera for video conferencing when Zoom is used

When Zoom is used, the camera in C210 should be setup and used.

6th and final Afretec progress report

It is prudent to note that some extra work done by CMU-Africa was not funded by Afretec, but was under courtesy funding from a different source, and this was necessary to enable the completion of the extra work taken up.

All work that has been done by the time the project winds up on 30th June 2026 needs to be documented, clearly showing the work that was done as per to the work plan expectations and the extra work that was done above and beyond what CMU-Africa was expected to deliver. It is also advisable to highlight the DEC work that involves building upon CSSR4Africa to enable Pepper give tours of the DEC, and the nature and outcomes of the partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand. Section 6.1 of progress report 4 provides some information that may be useful regarding this task.

9. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 10th February 2026 at 11:00am in Room C210.

End of the Meeting

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the meeting at 12:00 noon.

Action items following the meeting of the CSSR4Africa project

Action	Action description	Responsible	Completion date
1	Hand over source code for most recent working demo to Yohannes	Tsegazeab	06 February, 2026
2	Upload most recent version of working source code to a branch of CSSR4Africa's GitHub repository	Everyone	06 February, 2026
3	Discuss in the lab on how to handle CSSR4Africa ROSAS evaluations, and choose someone to lead this process	Tsegazeab	06 February, 2026
4	Go through culture knowledge document shared by Tsegazeab and prioritise the culture knowledge to be implemented in the short time remaining to project completion	Everyone	06 February, 2026
5	Submit the 5 th Afretec progress report	Prof Moise	06 February, 2026
6	Upload the 5 th Afretec progress report to the CSSR4Africa website as soon as Prof Moise submits it to Afretec	Tsegazeab	06 February, 2026
7	Complete the gesture action server and hand over the updated gesture ROS node to Danso	Tsegazeab	06 February, 2026
8	Complete the navigation action server and hand over the updated navigation ROS node to Danso	Birhanu	06 February, 2026
9	Update the spelling of Afretec in the minutes for the meeting held on 27 th January 2026 (AfreTech is used, which is a misspelling)	Tsegazeab and Birhanu	06 February, 2026

Table 1: Action Items