



**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

Sixtieth session

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 30 August –3 September 2010

**RESOLUTION**

**EHEALTH SOLUTIONS IN THE AFRICAN REGION:  
CURRENT CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES (Document AFR/RC60/5)**

The Regional Committee,

Having examined the document entitled “eHealth Solutions in the African Region: Current Context and Perspectives”;

Aware of the significant role that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play in strengthening national health systems in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and the improvement of health outcomes in the Region;

Noting that eHealth can improve the availability, quality and use of information and evidence for policy and decision making through, among others, strengthened health information systems and public health surveillance systems;

Further noting that the use of ICT can improve efficiency in health services through solutions such as the use of Personal Digital Assistants at the point of care, electronic health records, and other applications which provide patient billing, patient scheduling and tracking, and electronic transmission of prescriptions, and ultimately improve the quality of care;

Recognizing that ICT applications through telemedicine can contribute to improving equity in health by connecting underserved populations in rural areas with urban health facilities with highly qualified personnel and medical technologies;

Aware that ICT solutions can contribute to training and professional development of health workers through continuing medical education using targeted eLearning programmes and help address the Human Resources for Health crisis;

Recognizing that the spread of ICT including the Internet and mobile phones provides an opportunity to reach the public at home, at school and at the workplace with health educational and promotional information;



Recalling World Health Assembly Resolution 58.28 on eHealth; Regional Committee Resolution AFR/RC56/R8 on Knowledge Management in the WHO African Region: Strategic Directions; the Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health Systems in Africa: Achieving Better Health for Africa in the New Millennium; and the Algiers Declaration on Narrowing the Knowledge Gap to Improve Africa's Health;

Concerned that the rapid advances in ICT have put countries under intense market pressures to adopt ICT-associated services, prompting the need to ensure that the introduction of ICT in the health sector is driven by country needs and appropriate policies rather than pressures from technology producers;

Aware that key challenges which impede wide-scale implementation of eHealth solutions include the "digital divide", limited awareness of eHealth, lack of a conducive policy environment, weak leadership and coordination, inadequate financial and human resources, weak ICT infrastructure and services within the health sector, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems;

1. ENDORSES the document entitled "eHealth Solutions in the African Region: Current Context and Perspectives";
2. URGES Member States:
  - (a) to promote national political commitment to and awareness of eHealth including identifying and using champions for the purpose, and to develop the capacity of the health sector to negotiate with ministries responsible for telecommunications and other line ministries and to lead the national process of adoption of eHealth;
  - (b) to develop a conducive policy environment by conducting a national needs assessment for eHealth, developing national policies, strategies, norms and appropriate governance mechanisms, and drawing up long-term strategic plans or frameworks for eHealth;
  - (c) to strengthen leadership and coordination for eHealth including considering the establishment of multidisciplinary and intersectoral support mechanisms;
  - (d) to build infrastructure and establish services for eHealth including Internet connections for health institutions and websites for ministries of health, local area networks, and telemedicine facilities, within their specific environments, while ensuring the interoperability of systems;
  - (e) to systematically develop human capacity for eHealth by introducing ICT curriculum in health training institutions including eHealth training in continuing education programmes for health workers and by promoting the use of eLearning programmes for professional education, and to recruit experts in eHealth;
  - (f) to make the necessary investments in eHealth infrastructure and services using domestic and external financing while ensuring integration of ICT in all budgetary processes to promote sustainability and encourage the involvement of the private sector;
  - (g) to establish monitoring and evaluation systems to measure progress in the implementation of the national eHealth strategic plans;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to facilitate high-level advocacy and coordination of partners' action, in collaboration with the African Union and regional economic communities, the UN-ECA, International Telecommunications Union, international financing institutions, for adequate resource mobilization and efficient technical cooperation;
- (b) to provide technical support to Member States for the development of national eHealth strategic plans and implementation of eHealth applications and solutions, including providing guidance on negotiations with the vendors of eHealth solutions;
- (c) to support Member States in monitoring eHealth services and in documenting and sharing experiences and Best Practices;
- (d) to report to the Sixty-second Session of the Regional Committee, and thereafter every other year, on the progress being made.