
ITU e-Health Strategies and Resources

ICT Connectivity for e-Health



ITU Telecom
WHO/ITU Booth



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Introduction to ITU

- Leading UN agency for information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Founded in 1865, ITU is the oldest specialized agency in the UN system
- Global focal point for governments and the private sector with 191 Member States, 900+ Sector Members and Associates
- ITU Headquarters in Geneva, 11 regional and area offices, 700 staff of 80 nationalities



ITU Activities

- ITU work is implemented through its three Sector's:

Standardization (ITU-T)

Radiocommunication (ITU-R)

Development (ITU-D)

- ITU also organizes TELECOM events:



ITU TELECOM WORLD 2009: an event for the global telecommunication and information communication technology (ICT) sector, and a platform for global telecommunications and ICTs

- ITU Website: www.itu.int/

e-Health: A Priority for Development

Electronic health (e-health) is :

- One of the fields ICT applications can support sustainable development (WSIS, Geneva Action Plan - Section C7.14)
- A means to advance the achievement of national, regional and internationally agreed development goals (ITU's Doha Action Plan, 2006)



ITU's Development Sector :

- Promotes the use of ICTs for development
- Leads the implementation of the WSIS development outcomes

e-Health Challenges in Developing Countries

- Weak health systems and infrastructure
- Need for increased awareness at the national and local level about:



- The potential of existing ICT infrastructure and applications for health care provision
- How to implement e-health to help meet international and national health priorities
- Available expertise and financial resources to develop and implement national e-health strategies

ITU e-Health Activities

In the area of health care, WSIS :

- Promotes collaboration for the provision of reliable and high-quality health care **through the use of ICTs.**



ITU-D assists Member States in exploiting ICTs' potential to:

- Meet national health care priorities and public health needs
- Expand the reach of their existing health resources to distant communities
- Diffuse vital health information among the population
- Collect health data and monitor diseases

ITU Strategies for e-Health Inclusion

1. Advance the **establishment of ICT infrastructure**
2. Provide tools for the development of **national e-health strategies**
3. Promote **cooperation among** relevant stakeholders
4. Facilitate **information exchange**

1. Advancing ICT Infrastructure

- Connecting the unconnected remains a challenge:

- High speed broadband connectivity, needed for key e-health applications, is expensive or unavailable

- Insufficient local content

- Traditional business models often do not support the needed investment

- Few trained people in the required technologies

ITU “Connect the World”

- **ITU Connect the World summits to mobilize resources in each region:**
- Leaders from industry, development banks, governments, international/regional organizations
- Projects to realize common goals



- **Connect the World Submission:**

- **First summit - Connect Africa**

- USD 55 Billion in commitments for ICT development by 2012

- **Connect CIS 2009, Connect Americas 2010, Connect Arab States 2011, Connect Asia-Pacific 2012**

Wireless Broadband Initiative

Objective :

- Ambitious ITU initiative to expand broadband access in underserved areas of Africa
- ITU's initiative: ITU is working with governments and other partners

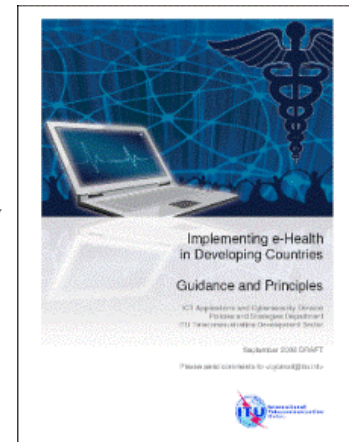


Expected outcomes :

- Develop and deploy wireless networks
- Guarantee capacity for schools and hospitals
- Train local experts and build human capacity
- Develop ICT Applications: e-health, e-education, e-government

2. Providing Tools for National e-Health Strategies

- To support the development of national e-strategies, in 2008 ITU produced the scoping study *“Implementing e-Health in Developing Countries”*

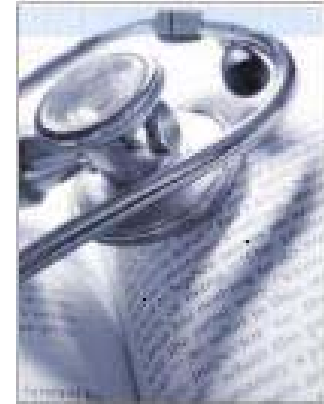


- **The scoping study:**

- Provides a methodology for implementing ICTs in health
- Intends to enhance the efficiency of health systems
- Ultimately supports the sustainable and effective use of such services

Providing Tools *(cont.)*

- Practical guidelines for the development of national e-Health strategies developed by ITU in collaboration with WHO and other key players in 2009



- The **Guidelines for National e-Health Strategies** modules:
 - Provide recommendations for and examples of best practices relating to the life-cycle of national e-Health strategies
 - Work on “Module 1: Assessment of needs and priorities” is underway

3. Promoting Cooperation

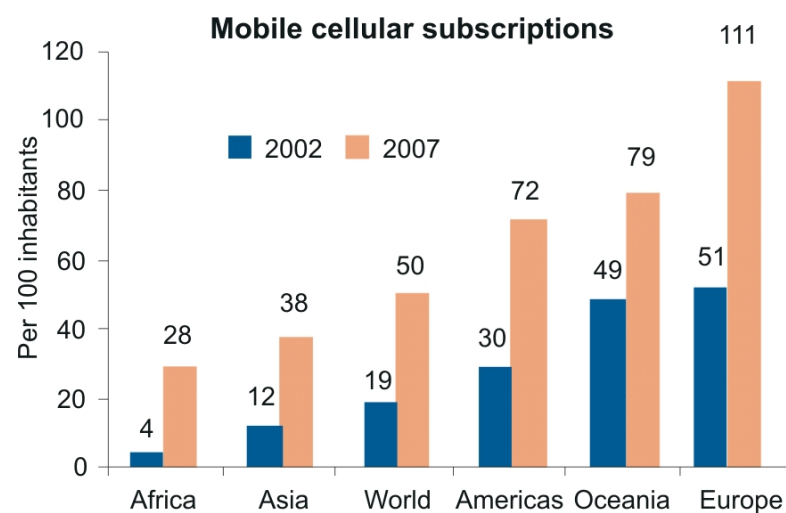
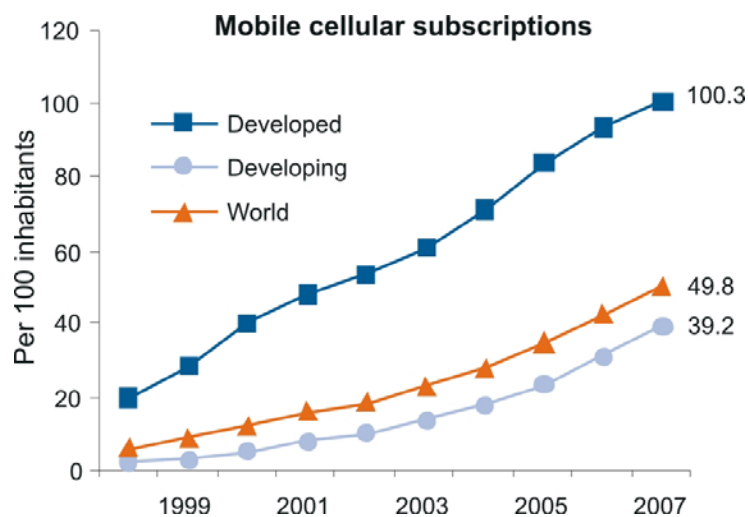


- The introduction of e-Health applications requires **multidisciplinary collaboration**
- **ITU** facilitates the establishment of public-private partnerships
- All countries to create **national e-Health committees** or Task Forces for cooperation and coordination
- Based on Resolution 41
World Telecommunication Development Conference
(Istanbul, 2002)

Cooperation: ITU mHealth Initiative

- Mobile telecommunication's big potential as a platform for e-Health services (m-Health) :

- Over 4 billion mobile cellular subscribers
- Ubiquitous platform in developing countries



Source: ITU, 2008



Committed to connecting the world

Cooperation : ITU m-Health Initiative (*cont.*)

- **ITU Goal:**

Promote the coordinated introduction of cost-effective mHealth applications in developing countries



- ITU is discussing with other UN organizations and members of industry to **develop a platform for “mHealth Initiatives”** :

- Mobile phones can be integrated into a computer system to create an integrated health care information system

- mHealth technology for rural areas can also include mobile healthcare units

Cooperation: ITU Study Groups on e-Health



- Study Groups (SG) dedicated to e-Health related issues :
 - ITU-D SG 2 Question 14-2/2: Telecommunications for e-Health
 - ITU-T SG 16 Question 28/16: Multimedia Framework for e-Health Applications
 - ITU-T SG 17 Question 9/17: Telebiometrics
- These Study Group Questions bring together ITU diverse members (government, industry, academics, other stakeholders) to lead the work (studies, recommendations, best practices) on diverse aspects of e-Health

4. Facilitating Information Exchange

- **ITU and WHO's collaboration** in 2009, to collect information on and facilitate the exchange of best practices and successful initiatives on e-health



- **2009 Global Observatory for e-Health Survey :**
 - Updates WHO's survey conducted for WSIS in 2005
 - Gathers information on ongoing national e-Health programmes
- **e-Health event @ TELECOM World** (Geneva, October 2009):
 - Promotes mHealth applications and technologies deemed valuable for use in developing countries

Information Exchange (*cont.*)

➤ e-Health Pavilion @ ITU TELECOM World:

- ITU, in collaboration with WHO presents the e-Health Pavilion
- The Pavilion provides a dynamic environment to showcase e-Health applications from around the world



Contact cybmail@itu.int
for more information!

Remaining Challenges

Need for improved **evidence of the economic and social benefits** of e-Health

Problems achieving **interoperable e-Health applications**

Many pilots for e-Health projects exist, but **scalability** is an issue

Improved **communication** between telecom and health sectors

Conclusions



- The telecommunication and health care sectors have to work together in developing national e-Health strategies
- Successful e-Health services require commitment to promote national strategies and facilitate capacity building
- ITU-D is ready to collaborate with WHO in order to jointly assist its Member State strengthening their e-Health capacity and projects

Additional Resources

- ITU statistical database of ICT indicators per country and region
(www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/index.html)
- Expert aid in drafting and implementing national e-Health projects
(www.itu.int/ITU-D/projects/index.html)
- Training opportunities
(www.itu.int/ITU-D/hrd/tc/index.asp)
- Policy and regulatory reports and symposia
(www.itu.int/ITU-D/treg/index.html)
- Regional office in Addis Ababa to support Member States in Africa
(www.itu.int/ITU-D/afr/CMS/index.asp)

Thank You!

For more information on
ITU's e-Health Activities
visit the website at:

www.itu.int/ITU-D/cyb/app/e-health.html

or contact cybmail@itu.int