



Country Ownership Strategies: Leadership Forum on Health Information Systems

Effective and Sustainable Health Information Systems Through Country Ownership

Name, location & dates of event:

Name: Country Ownership Strategies: Leadership Forum on Health Information Systems

Location: UN Conference Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dates: August 10-12, 2009

USG entity submitting request & any other sponsoring organizations:

Co-Sponsors:

- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with the Regional Health and HIV/AIDS Office, USAID/East Africa
- The World Bank
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Health Metrics Network (HMN)
- UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Support provided by:

- USAID-funded projects:
Health Systems 20/20 (Abt Associates)
Health Policy Initiative (Futures Group)
Analysis, Information Management & Communications (AIM) Activity (RTI International)
- Touchstone Consulting Group, Inc.

Total attendance (USG attendees broken out by HQ/field):

Approximately 100 persons:

- 5-10 senior officials per country represented (7 countries)
- 20 representatives from international partner organizations/co-sponsors
- 20 USG attendees from Missions of countries represented at Forum (primarily USAID)

Information and Contact:

HIS Forum website: <http://my.ibpinitiative.org/HealthInformationSystems>

Contact: HealthInformationSystems@my.ibpinitiative.org





COUNTRY OWNERSHIP STRATEGIES: LEADERSHIP FORUM ON HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Summer 2009

Background: Managing health information is critical to effectively targeting health interventions, to improving the delivery of health services, and to ensuring both the sustainability and accountability of the health investments of national governments and international donors. The increasing complexity of health care delivery and financing, and the transformative nature of today's information and communication technologies, present a challenge to national health information systems (HIS) as they strive to collect, analyze, and manage critical information about epidemiological trends and the delivery of health services. The largest international donors, including the U.S. Government, the World Bank, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, rely heavily on these systems to access reliable data to make informed program and policy decisions. National HIS, however, are often too disease-specific, fragmented, and delinked from strategic program planning or evaluation to provide health program leaders and managers the information they need to make informed decisions.

In recent years, significant efforts have been deployed toward increasing awareness of the importance of strengthening HIS and toward making substantial additional resources available for this purpose. The establishment of the Health Metrics Network (HMN), for example, and the creation of a Global Fund mechanism devoted to HIS strengthening (rounds 8 and 9) are among the results of these efforts. Furthermore, recent bilateral and multilateral agreements re-affirm the coordination, harmonization, and integration of HIS tasks and services as required elements of future programming.

The Forum will draw upon the HIS country assessments that the Health Metrics Network, USAID and other organizations have carried out in many countries in Africa and other regions. It will also take into account ongoing strategic planning efforts of strengthening national HIS that have been initiated by the Health Metrics Network and its partners through HIS Strategic Planning workshops in Pretoria, South Africa and in Dakar, Senegal in 2009.

Purpose: The proposed high-level forum – “Country Ownership Strategies: Leadership Forum On Health Information Systems” – seeks to capitalize on such ongoing initiatives by proposing ways of accelerating the development and implementation of country-owned strategies for strengthening HIS. USAID, in collaboration with WHO, the World Bank, and other key United Nations agencies and implementing partners, will host the three-day forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the summer of 2009. The aim of the forum will be to strengthen and accelerate country-owned and country-led strategies for managing HIS in seven focal countries in East and Southern Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda). The forum will serve as a venue for sharing approaches and linking countries with potential sources of technical and financial resources for strengthening HIS.



Forum Objectives: The specific objectives of the forum are to:

- Develop a shared awareness of the best options and strategies for improving coordinated country HIS
- Establish a common policy agenda and strategy to improve country HIS
- Support and strengthen country teams as catalysts for promoting country ownership of HIS
- Provide participants with information and access to financial and technical assistance from national and international partners committed to supporting country-level HIS strengthening

Target Audience: The target audience for the forum will include senior-level leaders and policymakers who can play critical roles in promoting the improvement of national HIS. Delegations from the participant countries should include decisionmaker-level representation from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the government ministry responsible for telecommunications, the national HIV/AIDS commission (or equivalent) and/or Coordinating Council Mechanism, the institution responsible for national vital statistics or census, and the military medical services, if they provide significant health services. These country representatives will be joined by development partners, including WHO, HMN, the World Bank, and USAID and other bilateral agencies.

Forum Agenda: To encourage cross-sector team building and problem-solving skills, the forum will present interactive country-level scenarios of increasing complexity. Country representatives will present where they are in their strategic planning process and the current status of managing HIS in their respective countries, and donors and development partners will provide an overview of available financial and technical resources to support coordinated country-level HIS. Country delegations will be engaged before, during, and after the forum to identify key strengths and weaknesses in their country HIS and to develop strategies for coordination and improvement. At the end of the forum, country delegations will have initiated the development of country action plans.

Expected Outcomes:

- Country teams will have articulated the skills required to manage health information systems as an asset.
 - Participants gain the understanding and skills to assess and manage current HIS capabilities and to learn strategies for improving them and identifying emerging opportunities.
 - Country teams are aware of available technical and financial resources and know how to identify, access, and use them to respond to existing and new HIS challenges.
 - Country teams appreciate the value of the multisectoral efforts and skills required to advocate and lead efforts to strengthen country HIS.
 - Country teams are committed to lead and champion the execution of multisectoral action plans to apply strategies and techniques acquired during the forum.
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Partner Contributions to Country Ownership Forum on Health Information Systems

US Agency for International Development (USAID)

Health Systems 20/20

Preparatory work for Forum; overall management, leadership, facilitation of Forum and planning meetings; Forum facilitation; Participant sponsorship.

Analysis, Information Management and Communications (AIM) Activity

Preparatory work for the Forum, materials and communications, pre-meeting logistics, onsite meeting management, registration, facilitation.

Health Policy Initiative

Planning and preparation, TA in survey design, implementation, and analysis, development of case studies, travel to planning meetings and Forum.

The World Bank

Forum planning; Forum facilities and catering; Participant sponsorship

World Health Organization (WHO)

Forum planning; Participant sponsorship

Health Metrics Network (HMN)

Forum planning; Participant sponsorship

UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Forum planning; Participant sponsorship

East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC)

Forum planning; Participant and speaker identification

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Forum planning; Participant sponsorship

Synergy International Systems

Forum planning; Participant sponsorship

Touchstone Consulting Group, Inc.

Group facilitation
