



**International Telecommunication Union**  
**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA**



Ref: ROA/ADD/AR/ma/L026/21

Addis Ababa, 16 April 2021

To: -ITU Member States in Africa  
-ITU-D Sector Members

Subject: **Invitation to Workshop on Data Revolution, Health Status Transformation and the Role of Artificial Intelligence for Health and Pandemic Preparedness in the African Context, 21-24 June 2021, Virtual**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the Workshop on Data Revolution, Health Status Transformation and the Role of AI for Health and Pandemic Preparedness in the African Context, which will take place virtually, from 21 to 24 June 2021.

Digital health through technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) have the potential to offer new insights and tools, improve decision making and predictive analytics for health emergency preparedness. It also enables the mitigation of workforce shortages, the development of tailored programs, brings efficiencies to health service delivery and addresses multiple challenges that include strengthening underlying digital infrastructure and digital health systems.

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered unprecedented demand for digital technology solutions in screening populations, tracking infections and minimizing direct human contact. The use of different technologies at every step has brought efficiencies in tracking and tracing contacts, testing and in case management. Most importantly, technology has played and continues to play a vital role in protecting medical personnel by limiting direct contact with patients, disinfecting controlled environments and disseminating public health and emergency messages. By leveraging the use of digital technology in Africa in the health sector, different health crises can be managed better and health care systems strengthened through effective and more efficient digital mechanisms.

In this context, ITU and WHO with the support of USAID are co-organizing this workshop to bring together policy makers, technical experts, academia, private sector innovators, among others, to discuss critical policy dimensions of strengthening digital health ecosystems and lay the foundation for responsibly developing and adopting innovations such as AI in African health systems. This will be a technical workshop that precedes a high level Ministerial meeting during which the findings from this workshop will be presented.

During the workshop, participants will discuss the latest advances in digital technology, AI tools and techniques with key considerations for their development and use in the African context, particularly during times of health emergencies and beyond as underscored by COVID-19. It will also aim to identify concrete actions to shape policy and enabling environments to foster digital technology, showcase AI driven innovative solutions for health that have been developed, share best practices that can be adopted, discuss issues of finance to support digital transformation and strengthen economies for sustainability.

In this regard, we seek your support to designate a representative with direct knowledge and working in the area of digital health to participate in this workshop. A similar invitation has been sent by the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa to the Ministry of Health and key actors in the Academia.

We would also very much appreciate your support in extending this invitation to your government counterparts in the Ministry of Finance to encourage their participation in the workshop as well.

We invite you to submit the details of the proposed participants by 15 May 2021 at the latest and detailed information about registration and other logistical information will also be shared. A draft agenda related to the workshop can be found on the ITU website: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Africa/Pages/default.aspx>

For further clarifications required, you may contact Caroline Gaju, Programme Officer, ITU Regional Office for Africa. Email: [Caroline.Gaju@itu.int](mailto:Caroline.Gaju@itu.int) , Tel: +251 115 514977/4855.

We look forward and appreciate your active participation in the upcoming workshop.

Yours faithfully,

[Original Signed]

Andrew Rugege  
ITU Regional Director for Africa and  
Liaison to ECA and AU

CC: Doreen Bogdan-Martin  
BDT Director