



EHEALTH WORKSHOP

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OPENING REMARKS

SAMEER SHARMA

**SENIOR ADVISOR, REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA -PACIFIC
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION**

Mr. Eiichi Tanaka (Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, MIC, Japan,
Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of the ITU here today in Tokyo for this opportunity to look at how can we work together to achieve the goal of advancing e-health standards and identifying future needs, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders which are based on the requirements of eHealth implementation in low-resource settings.
- I would like first of all to thank the Ministry of internal Affairs and Communication MIC of Japan for hosting this workshop as well as all Japanese private companies that have contributed significantly to make this workshop a reality.
- This workshop is a follow-up on the Joint ITU-WHO workshop on e-health Standards and Interoperability (April 2012) and aims at facilitating information sharing between e-health experts and to increase the understanding between developed and developing countries of what are the common threads, the different priorities and the challenges amongst the identified priorities and needs for implementation of e-health services in low-resource settings. The overarching goal is to identify a comprehensive roadmap for ITU activities towards implementation of e-health services in low-resource settings that includes the necessary standardization and interoperability studies.

- In a world of 7 billion people, with a growing and ageing population, information and communication technologies – ICTs – will play an absolutely vital role in the provision and delivery of healthcare in the 21st century. E-health technologies – and m-health applications in particular – will be key in providing affordable, sustainable, quality primary health services, especially to patients in rural and remote areas.
- In terms of direct patient care, e-health technologies enable remote patient monitoring; better dissemination of information to patients; improved access to health advice; the possibility for access to remote consultations and telemedicine; and quicker access to emergency services.
- E-health technologies also help deliver better training for healthcare workers, and improve disease surveillance, data collection, and the management of patient records, as well as increasing transparency and accountability. The complementary areas of e-health and m-health continue to be growing priorities for ITU, and our membership has been very active in putting forward health-related resolutions at our major institutional conferences – resolutions which have received strong support from all quarters.
- This strengthened mandate has allowed us to reinforce our e-health and m-health activities.
- We do this in the Development Sector, of course, but also at a technical level – through standardization and interoperability initiatives, for example, as well as working to ensure that there is sufficient radiofrequency spectrum available for the mobile and wireless applications without which e-health and m-health would be impossible.
- These activities are aimed to address specific challenges, including:
 - The information-driven health system transformation process;
 - The development of global e-health standards;
 - The development of e-health strategies and solutions; and
 - Advancing the establishment of ICT infrastructures for health.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- In closing, therefore, let me say how proud we are at ITU of what we have already achieved together, and how much we are looking forward to seeing further progress in this very important area. We are very much looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the discussions during the workshop.

Thank you.