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| **ITU-T Focus Group on AI for Health** |
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| **Title:** | Hosting of the 6th meeting of the ITU-T FG AI4H in India in the Fall of 2019 |
| **Purpose:** | Discussion |
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| **Abstract:** | In recognition of the growing importance of digital health technologies, including AI, the World Health Organization (WHO) Member States unanimously adopted the resolution on Digital Health during their Seventy-first World Health Assembly on 26 May 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The ITU-T Focus Group-AI4H (FG AI4H) was established by ITU and WHO in July 2018. The Focus Group will work in partnership with the WHO to establish a standardized assessment framework for the evaluation of AI-based methods for health, diagnosis, triage or treatment decisions. Participation in the FG-AI4H is free of charge and open to all. Two meetings of the FG have already been held till date. The third meeting of the FG AI4H is scheduled from 23rd to 25th January, 2019 in Lausanne, Switzerland. 4th and 5th meeting dates and venues have also been decided. India would thus, like to host the 6th meeting of the ITU-TFG-AI4H in the Fall of 2019. |

# Rationale and scope

India has the 2nd largest telecommunications network in the world that has facilitated the growth of ICT sector and use of technology-based applications. Mobile based internet will reach 700 million to 900 million Indians by 2025[[1]](#footnote-1). Mobile internet can provide the foundation for remote health care and when technology-based applications are used in combination, they can have transformative effects. For example, the mobile Internet could bring the knowledge of specialist physicians to community health workers using a combination of two other disruptive technologies: “automation of knowledge work”, software residing in the cloud digital tools that enable health-care workers with modest skills to carry out basic protocols, and low-cost diagnostic devices that work with smartphones. Another powerful combination is using Internet of Things technology (tiny sensors that can be used for tracking), the mobile Internet, and the cloud to monitor prescription drugs and stanch the flow of counterfeits[[2]](#footnote-2). Using Internet of Things tracking systems to curb counterfeit drugs could be worth as much as $15 billion per year. The total value of empowering technologies in health care could be $25 billion to $65 billion per year in 2025.

This use of technology is leading to generation of ‘Big Data’ in the medical sector, which forms the basis for Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. India is a leading player in ICT as well as Medical Research and it is important that it is involved in the work of the FG. AI can be of immense use in improving data quality, developing prediction models, discovering hidden correlations, elucidating transmission dynamics etc.

A huge volume of data is generated from surveillance of various communicable and noncommunicable diseases by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). ICMR is running AMR surveillance Network since 2013. Using the data ICMR has successfully developed AI based method for prediction of antibiogram with 90% accuracy. Further ICMR is developing method for low-cost identification of resistance transmission networks. ICMR has also developed portal for management of data generated by the National Leprosy Eradication Program and AI based automated image analysis tool for prediction of cell abnormalities and cervical cancer lesions.

# Proposal

India (ICMR & NICF, DoT) with its excellent ICT and medical professionals can provide critical inputs for developing protocols/frameworks for AI for health work and would thus like to host the 6th meeting of the ITU-T FG-A4H in the fall of 2019. This will give an opportunity for a large number of relevant experts in the field to participate in the work and help in setting the agenda for developing standards in this important area.

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1. India’s Technology Opportunity: Transforming work, empowering people (McKinsey Global Institute), December 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-2)