



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

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Geneva, 26 June 2012

Administrations of:

AFRO: Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya,
South Africa

ARB: Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia

ASP: Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines, Australia

AMS: Bolivia, Mexico

EURO: Sweden, Austria

Subject: **Joint WHO-ITU Meeting on “National eHealth Strategy Development: Country experience and next steps”, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 25-26 July 2012**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Developing a national eHealth program is a goal of many countries. A national eHealth program can contribute to reaching health and development goals and, for some countries, will constitute a major step towards implementing recommendations such as those of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women’s and Children’s Health. Experience has shown that harnessing information and communication technologies (ICT) for health requires planning at the national level, to make the best use of existing capacity while providing a solid foundation for investment and innovation. Establishing the main directions, as well as planning the detailed steps needed, is key to achieving longer-term goals such as health sector efficiency, reform or more fundamental transformation.

As the major United Nations agencies for health and telecommunications respectively, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have recognized the importance of collaboration for eHealth in their global resolutions, which encourage countries to develop national eHealth strategies. Towards that goal, the two agencies have collaborated to develop a “**National eHealth Strategy toolkit**” - a comprehensive, practical guide that all governments, their national ministries, departments and agencies can adapt to suit their own circumstances and goals.

With a view to supporting national eHealth strategy development, ITU, together with WHO, is inviting a representative from your ministry to a **meeting** to be held in **Geneva on 25-26 July 2012** to launch the WHO-ITU National eHealth Planning Framework and country support programme, share experiences and lessons learned from national eHealth strategy development efforts and identify stakeholders’ (donors, international/regional organizations, Ministries of Health/ICT) roles in supporting national eHealth strategy development. **Your country representative should ideally be a senior staff in charge of information and communication technology for Health activities in the ministry.**

An overview of the National eHealth Strategy Toolkit can be downloaded from <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/cyb/app/e-health/NeHSToolkit/intro.phtml>, with the full document available two weeks prior to the meeting.

The event will take place in WHO headquarters, Geneva, 25-26 July 2012 and it will open at 08:30am hours. Information relating to the event is available in Annex 1.

A similar invitation has been sent to the Ministry of Health in your country by WHO. We anticipate that representatives from both ministries will jointly present your country's experience to develop a national eHealth strategy, if there is one already or, your country's progress, challenges, future plans for eHealth and the possible need for a national strategy.

We would appreciate if you can send us the name of the representative who will participate at the meeting before **13 July 2012**.

For confirming participation or for further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Hani Eskandar, email: hani.eskandar@itu.int.

I look forward with great anticipation to your participation in this event.

[Original signed]

Brahima Sanou
Director

Annex: 1

ANNEX 1

Information on the Joint ITU-WHO meeting on “National eHealth Strategy Development: Country experience and next steps”, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 25-26 July 2012

Objectives

The key workshop objective is to bring together multiple stakeholders from ministries of health and ICT, international and regional organizations, donors and experts who have an interest in developing country led national eHealth strategies in order to understand their views, learn from their experiences, gain their commitment and endorsement and mobilize resources to support them towards initiating national eHealth planning processes which will guide and coordinate national efforts and strengthen support for eHealth.

The specific objectives of the Workshop are:

1. Launch the WHO-ITU National eHealth Planning Framework and support programme.
2. Share experiences and lessons learned from national eHealth strategy development efforts.
3. Learn about countries' plans and needs in terms of national eHealth planning.
4. Identify possible stakeholders' roles and responsibilities to support national eHealth strategy development.
5. Initiate peer support and south-south collaboration.

Venue

The event will take place in WHO headquarters, Geneva, 25-26 July 2012 and it will open at 08:30am hours.

Language

Discussions will be held in English only.

Workshop programme

A draft programme of the event is found in **Annex 2**.

Contacts

Hani Eskandar
ICT Applications Technical Officer
Cybersecurity and ICT Applications Division
ITU/BDT/IEE/CYB
hani.eskandar@itu.int

Mario Maniewicz
Chief, Infrastructure, Enabling Environment
and E-Applications, ITU/BDT/IEE
mario.maniewicz@itu.int

Fellowships

ITU will provide a limited number of full fellowships to **one participant per eligible country** and within the available budget. The participant must be duly authorized by the respective ITU Administrations from Least Developed Countries and from developing countries with per-capita income under US\$ 2,000. While the provision of a fellowship is limited to only one participant per country, the number of delegates from a country is not limited provided the expenses of additional delegates are borne by the country. Participants requiring a fellowship are requested to complete the **Fellowship Request Form** in **Annex 3** and return it to the ITU by **e-mail: bdtfellowships@itu.int** or by fax to: +41 22 730 5778 by **6 July 2012 at the latest**.

Visa

We would remind you that citizens of some countries are required to obtain a visa in order to enter and spend any time in Switzerland. **The visa must be** obtained from the office (embassy or consulate) representing Switzerland in your country or, if there is no such office in your country, from the one that is closest to the country of departure.