



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

ITU-T

TELECOMMUNICATION
STANDARDIZATION SECTOR
OF ITU

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION
ASSEMBLY
Dubai, 20-29 November 2012

Resolution 78 – Information and communication technology applications and standards for improved access to e-health services

CAUTION !
PREPUBLISHED RESOLUTION

This prepublication is an unedited version of a recently approved Resolution. It will be replaced by the published version after editing. Therefore, there will be differences between this prepublication and the published version.

FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications, information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

© ITU 2012

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, by any means whatsoever, without the prior written permission of ITU.

RESOLUTION 78

Information and communication technology applications and standards for improved access to e-health services

(Dubai, 2012)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Dubai, 2012),

recalling

- a)* Resolution 183 (Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) applications for e-health;
- b)* Resolution 65 (Hyderabad, 2010) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on improving access to healthcare services by using ICTs,

recognizing

- 1 the importance of safeguarding patients' rights and privacy;
- 2 that there are national legislative and regulatory discussions relating to e-health and e-health applications and that this is an area of rapid evolution,

considering

- a)* that the World Summit on the Information Society, which was held in two phases (Geneva, 2003 and Tunis, 2005), included e-health in the Geneva Plan of Action as one of the important ICT applications, and stated the following: "Promote collaborative efforts of governments, planners, health professionals, and other agencies along with the participation of international organizations for creating a reliable, timely, high-quality and affordable healthcare and health information systems and for promoting continuous medical training, education, and research through the use of ICTs, while respecting and protecting citizens' right to privacy. ... Encourage the adoption of ICTs to improve and extend healthcare and health information systems to remote and underserved areas and vulnerable populations, recognizing women's roles as health providers in their families and communities";
- b)* that the World Health Organization (WHO) approved in May 2005 Resolution WHA58.28 on e-health, stressing: "... that e-health is the cost-effective and secure use of information and communication technologies in support of health and health-related fields, including healthcare services, health surveillance, health literature, and health education, knowledge and research";
- c)* that WHO and ITU have a key role in strengthening coordination between interested parties in all technical areas for the standardization of e-health applications and uses of e-health protocols;
- d)* the pressing need for the provision of safe, prompt, efficient and effective healthcare to the sick through the use of ICT in e-health;
- e)* that e-health applications and the ICT applications supporting them are already extensive, but far from fully optimized and integrated;
- f)* the importance of maintaining momentum so that the potential advantages of telecommunication/ICT technologies in the healthcare sector are supported by appropriate and

secure regulatory, legal and policy frameworks in both the telecommunication and the health sectors,

noting

- a) ongoing work and studies in Study Group 2 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) under Question 14-3/2, on information and telecommunications/ICT for e-health;
- b) ongoing work and studies in Study Group 16 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) under Question 28/16, on multimedia framework for e-health applications;
- c) that ICT standards for healthcare were deemed to be an issue of major importance at the 13th session of the Global Standards Collaboration (GSC-13);
- d) that ICT standards relating to healthcare have to be adapted as needed to suit the conditions in each Member State, and this will require strengthening of capacity building and increased support;
- e) ongoing work in ITU-D to reduce the digital divide in the area of e-health,

resolves to instruct the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, in collaboration with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau and the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau

- 1 to give priority consideration to the enhancement of telecommunication/ICT initiatives in e-health and to coordinate their related standardization activities;
- 2 to continue and further develop ITU activities on telecommunication/ICT applications for e-health in order to contribute to the wider global efforts concerning e-health;
- 3 to work collaboratively with WHO, academia and other relevant organizations on activities related to e-health;
- 4 to study the possibility of organizing a global conference in 2013 or 2015 for the standardization of e-health applications and uses of e-health protocols, in collaboration with WHO and other interested parties;
- 5 to organize seminars and workshops on e-health for developing countries¹ and gauge the needs of the developing countries, which are the countries with the greatest need for e-health applications,

instructs Study Group 16, in collaboration with the relevant study groups, particularly Study Groups 11 and 17

- 1 to identify and document examples of best practice for e-health in the field of telecommunication/ICT, for dissemination among ITU Member States and Sector Members;
- 2 to coordinate activities and studies relating to e-health among the relevant study groups, focus groups and other relevant groups in ITU-T, the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) and ITU-D, in order in particular to foster awareness of telecommunication/ICT standards pertaining to e-health;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

3 to study communication protocols relating to e-health, especially among heterogeneous networks, to ensure the broad deployment of e-health services in diverse operating conditions;

4 within the current mandate of ITU-T study groups, to give priority to the study of security standards (e.g., for communications, services, network aspects and service scenarios of databases and record handling, identification, integrity and authentication) relating to e-health, taking into account recognizing 1,

invites Member States

to consider, as appropriate, the development and/or enhancement of frameworks which may include legislation, regulations, standards, codes of practice and guidelines to enhance the development of telecommunication/ICT services, products and terminals for e-health and e-health applications, within the scope of Plenipotentiary Resolution 130,

encourages Member States, Sector Members and academia

to participate actively in ITU-T studies on e-health, through the submission of contributions and by other appropriate means.