EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

THE 2ND EAC REGIONAL E-HEALTH AND TELEMEDICINE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE EXHIBITION

17TH MAY 2018

Kigali Convention and Exhibition Village
Kigali, Republic of Rwanda

Theme: *Harnessing science, technology and innovation to transform healthcare delivery and accelerate the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in East Africa*

REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

1.0. Preamble

The East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) in collaboration with the East African Regional Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and e-Health in the University of Rwanda, EAC Secretariat and Partner States convened the 2nd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine ministerial conference and international trade exhibition at the Kigali Convention and Exhibition Village, Kigali, Republic of Rwanda on 17th May 2018. The ministerial conference considered the report and recommendations of the 2nd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine workshop that was held from 15th to 16th May 2018 at the same venue.

The Ministers noted that the 2nd eHealth conference was building on the 1st Conference that was convened by the EAC Secretariat in Kigali, Rwanda in 2010, in collaboration with Partner States. The meeting recalled that the regional agenda to invest in e-Government which incorporates e-Health was approved by the 13th Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Heads of State that was held in 2006.

The Ministers further recalled that the 19th Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of States held in Kampala, Uganda on 23rd February 2018 approved nine health sector investment priorities for the period 2018 to 2028 and that one of the priority areas is Investment in e-health and that most of the other eight priorities heavily incorporate aspects of e-health.

2.0. Participation

The meeting was attended by the Rt. Hon. Dr. Ali H. Kirunda Kivejinja, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of EAC Affairs , Republic of Uganda and Chairperson and the EAC Council of Ministers, Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi, Minister of State for Health, Republic of Uganda, Hon. Dr. Patrick Ndimubandi, State Minister for Public and Primary Health, Ministry of Health, Rwanda; the Republic of Kenya was represented by Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Hon. Dr. Rashid Aman and Hon. Ken Obura, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of EAC and Northern Corridor Development. Hon. Ummy Mwalimu, Minister of Health, Community, Development, Gender, Elderly and Children was represented by Mr. Toritoi Ngosayon Bunto, Ag. High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania in Rwanda.

The ministerial conference brought together 120 participants from the following organizations and institutions from the region and beyond: MOH Rwanda, MOH Uganda, MOH Kenya, MOH-URT, WHO, FHI 360, IGAD, MOHCDGEC - URT, JEMBI, Kenya Conference of Catholic workshops, Intelligent/KeH14, UR-CEBE, GHT, Bunzo Hospital, MSH-TZ, MEACA-Uganda, MEACA-URT, MEACA-Kenya, RCE-UHSCM UR, EAC &NCD Kenya, UNICEF, Uganda High Commission, MINAFET, MEAC Kenya, Sayira Hospital, RBA, MINAFFET Rwanda, Tanzania High Commission, Umbrella, Awesomity lab, Nyamata DH, Oshen Healthcare, EAC, MOICT - Rwanda, PHDA, CHAI, IHI, Core Pay, KNH, Living Goods, RCE-HSG, EAC, RCEVIHSCM/UR, TMC, The Ihangane Project, Kcmucd (Tz), ITEC, COSTECH, CST/OR, UR-CPGS, ULK Polytechnic, RTI Institution, MEAC, President's Office URT, JSI, TMCG, Mohedgec, Jambi HS, Rwanda DISPATCH, Kamuco R, PATH, African Alliance, ACECOT - UR, UR SPU, Iris Hub, CDC-RW USA, ACET.T-UR, RISA, Parliament of Rwanda, IRIS, KCEV, Community Health Academy, IRISHub, MOEST – URT, UNFPA, ABT Association, UR-CMHS, Tantine Group ltd, Kibagabaga Hospital, MITEC, CHI, APHRC,

Karatina University, UIRI, East African Health Research Commission, University of Rwanda, Fio, Spherd, MSH, RBC, AFYA Research Africa, UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA EAC Secretariat, EASTECO and EAHRC. The detailed list of participants is hereto attached as **Annex I.**

3.0. Opening ceremony

Welcome Remarks by Ms. Gertrude Ngabirano, Executive Secretary of EASTECO

Ms. Gertrude Ngabirano, Executive Secretary of EASTECO welcomed the Ministers, EAC Partner States' Senior Officials and Partners to the 2nd EAC Regional eHealth and Telemedicine Ministerial Conference. She informed the Ministers that the ministerial conference was follow up to a workshop held from 15th to 16th May 2018 that covered three themes namely enabling environment for e-Heatth and Telemedicine through relevant policies and strategies; efficient and sustainable financial models for eHealth; and ICT based infrastructure and technologies to improve healthcare systems.

Ms. Ngabirano concluded her remarks by urging the Ministers to consider the recommendations from the Workshop and provide policy guidance to facilitate the scale up of eHealth the EAC region.

Official Address by Prof. Philip Cotton, Vice Chancellor, University of Rwanda

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Rwanda, **Prof. Philip Cotton** welcomed the Ministers and participants to the Kigali Convention and Exhibition Village for the Second EAC Regional eHealth and Telemedicine Conference. He recommended that while adopting and implementing eHealth strategies, other disciplines such as social sciences need to be incorporated beyond the traditional medial ICT disciplines.

Remarks from Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Hon. Dr. Rashid Aman

The Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health of Kenya, **Hon. Dr. Rashid Aman** shared the progress Kenya has made in eHealth. He reported that the Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Health is already implementing health Information systems to improve Service delivery. He indicated that eHealth is already recognized as a standard tool of healthcare in Kenya and is provided for in the National eHealth Policy. He underscored the role of eHealth in enabling healthcare personnel to use information technology for decisions making and improving service delivery.

He reiterated Kenya's commitment to ensuring that eHealth technologies are fully utilized in supporting service deliveries in health facilities; strengthening interoperability of health systems and investing in appropriate technologies such as mHealth.

He called upon the Partner States to develop mechanisms to facilitate data and information exchange among facilities within the country and among the Partner States.

Remarks from Hon. Dr. Patrick Ndimubanzi, State Minister for Public and Primary Health, Ministry of Health, Rwanda

Hon. Dr. Patrick Ndimubanzi, Minister of State for Public and Primary Health, Republic of Rwanda, welcomed delegates to Rwanda and congratulated EAC Secretariat, EASTECO and EAC Regional Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and e-health (CEBE) for convening the conference. He emphasized the importance of regulatory issues that were addressed during the workshop and the need for e-health to be integrated in all the health systems building blocks. He emphasized the need to train work force in eHealth. He congratulated the presenters and session chairs and wished the meeting fruitful deliberations.

Remarks from Hon. Mr. Toritoi Ngosayon Bunto, Ag. High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania in Rwanda, Representing the Minister responsible for Health, United Republic of Tanzania

Hon. Mr. Toritoi Ngosayon Bunto, Ag. High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania in Rwanda informed the meeting that the Tanzania Government was implementing an eHealth strategy aiming to make use of digital solutions to ensure that health workers, managers and decision makers at all levels of the health system have and use data to identify and solve problems, measure performance and allocate resources; and that health care workers use data to track clients, support clinical decisions and provide healthcare services efficiently.

He added that while East Africa member countries have variety of digital health solutions in place managed and supported by different institutions, most of them cannot easily share and exchange data. There is a need to ensure effective coordination of these different solutions and ways to appropriately link them together. This involves ensuring systems can "speak the same language" when referring to medical terms, to clients, to health workers, or to the administrative areas around which the Government is organized. Hence the need this conference.

The Ag. High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania in Rwanda ended his statement by wishing the meeting fruitful deliberations.

Remarks from Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi, Minister of State for Health, Republic of Uganda and Chairperson of the EAC Sectoral Council on Health

Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi, Minister of State for Health, Republic of Uganda and Chairperson of the EAC Sectoral Council on Health congratulated the organizers for convening the event after eight years. She informed the conference that the 16h Ordinary Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health held on 16th May 2018 recommended that the two yearly convening of the conferences on rotational basis among the Partner States be adhered to. She further informed the meeting that the Sectoral Council recommended that the 3rd conference be hosted by the Republic of Uganda in 2020 and she welcomed participants to participate in this conference.

Hon. Opendi urged the health sector to work in a multi-sectoral approach in order to successfully pursue the eHealth and Telemedicine agenda. She noted that most of EAC Partner States have developed eHealth straggles except for the Republics of Burundi and South Sudan. She underscored the importance of political will in advancing eHealth and noted

the EAC Summit of Heads of State had demonstrated political will by approving the 9 EAC Health sector investment priorities including eHealth. She called upon other sectoral ministries like ICT and infrastructure to work with the health sector and participate in future conferences.

Remarks from Rt. Hon. Dr. Ali H. Kirunda Kivejinja, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of EAC Affairs, Republic of Uganda and Chairperson and the EAC Council of Ministers

Rt. Hon. Dr. Ali H. Kirunda Kivejinja, the Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers welcomed the participants to Kigali and especially to the Second EAC Regional eHealth and Telemedicine Ministerial Conference. He commended the good collaboration among EASTECO, EAHRC, EAC Secretariat, East African Regional Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and eHealth and partners in convening this this Conference.

Hon. Kivejinja underscored the importance of the conference in bringing together public and private policymakers, technologists, academia, researchers, medical professionals, NGOs and development partners to discuss how technology can be used to enhance healthcare delivery, brainstorm on eHealth policies and regulations and showcase eHealth solutions. He therefore called for a continuous cooperation of EAC Partner States in developing relevant policies and adopting new technologies to enhance healthcare delivery through the use of information technology and communications systems with ultimate goal of improving the standards of living and increasing life expectancy of East Africans.

He ended his opening statement by wishing the Partner States fruitful deliberations.

Keynote address by Dr.Juliet Bataringaya, WHO Country Office, Rwanda

Dr.Juliet Bataringaya, WHO Country Office, Rwanda gave a keynote on International experience on Financing E-Health Programmes and Projects. The address focused on eHealth components aligned to the WHO Health Systems Framework, foundations for successful eHealth program, sstrategy and investment, financing e-Health solutions, business Models and PPPs and making e-Health financing sustainable. She underscored the importance of integrating e-Health financing into the overarching health sector financing strategy. Key components of e-Health strategies are leadership and governance, strategy and investment, services and applications, workforce, policy, legislation and compliance, infrastructure, and standards and inter-operability. Dr. Bataringaya highlighted the following as key foundational aspects to achieving e-Health success: a costed eHealth Strategy and Road Map that is grounded in a multi-sectoral national ICT Framework, government leadership and committed financing, effective governance mechanisms, stakeholder mobilization for successful implementation, eHealth as part of broader health systems strengthening and monitoring and evaluation. Financing e-Health should be based on a good understanding of the cost; leveraging whole of government, economic community blocs; negotiating price / collective bargaining, pricing according to GDP, negotiated rates through UN or AU; technical expertise, capacity building, innovation; and South-South collaboration to leverage learning.

4.0.   Conference Proceedings

The Ministers considered the report and the recommendations of the 2nd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine ministerial conference and international trade exhibition which covered the following thematic areas:

i. Policy and regulatory framework for e-Health and Telemedicine;
ii. Sustainable financing models for e-Health and Telemedicine;
iii. Building human capital for e-Health and Telemedicine;
iv. Infrastructure and technologies for e-Health;
v. Technology and innovation in strengthening infrastructure and e-readiness for improved healthcare delivery;
vi. Data and medical/health information systems;
vii. Innovative technologies for health including mobile communications technologies and imagery systems;
viii. Cross-border technology infrastructure to support Partner States capacity in e-Health and Telemedicine;
ix. Experiences in using e-Health initiatives to improve health services.

The 2nd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine ministerial conference and international trade exhibition made the following observations regarding the above topical areas:

i. e-Health is a cost-effective tool for improving healthcare access, integration of services and referrals, effectiveness, efficiency, quality of care and ultimately health outcomes
ii. The e-Health agenda in the region has until now majorly focused on data and health information management and so the regions needs to focus as well on developing the other areas of e-Health utility such as capacity building, health promotion, diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation.
iii. The focus of e-Health interventions in the region is steadily moving away from diseases to the broader health and wellbeing issues in line with SDG agenda
iv. Challenges or fear of patient safety, data security and protection, and privacy issues associated with use of e-Health tools continue to pose major risks to the development of e-Health and therefore require deliberate policy and regulatory guidance
v. Only 27 out of the 47 WHO Afro Member States have developed national e-health strategies in line with the National e-Health Strategy Toolkit, which has three key areas namely vision (strategic direction), implementation plan (leadership and governance; strategy investment; services and applications; standards and inter-operability; infrastructure; legislation, policy and compliance and workforce) and monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation including progress in regulation – only Republic Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania have developed their National e-Health Strategy.
vi. Effective e-Health/digital health systems are those that are patient/client centered and are supported through sustained high level political leadership, government ownership, linkage to the national health needs/national health policy and development plans, effective engagement, coordination and collaboration among the key stakeholders, enabling over-arching government wide ICT backbone, effective monitoring, evaluation and regular adaptation
vii. Effective regional policy and legal instruments for cross border exchange of data and information including for rapid alert systems in case of outbreaks among Partner States are lacking

viii.	Lack of a clear model on how to systematically identify, adopt and scale up pathfinder e-Health solutions from among the multiplicity of solutions
ix.	There is inadequate co-creation of e-Health solution between the public and private sector players
x.	The need to document the e-Health readiness of the Partner States
xi.	There is proliferation of e-Learning systems in the region's medical /healthcare training institutions but most of these are results of north-south collaboration, and less so, south-south collaborations
xii.	The need to develop e-Health training programmes/ curricular that meet the EAC Higher Education Qualifications Framework
xiii.	The East African Regional Centre of Excellence Biomedical Engineering and e-Health in the University of Rwanda has developed five (5) training modules in e-Health, a master's course in biomedical engineering and is currently developing a course in rehabilitation sciences
xiv.	Key challenges in the implementation of national e-Health strategies include weak leadership and governance, duplication of efforts and changing priorities resulting from parallel programming forces and inadequate resources
xv.	Partner States have implemented e-medical/health information solutions but to varying degrees especially with regard to instituting paperless medical records systems as well as creating integrated interoperable health information systems that link health resources information systems (e.g. human, logistics), laboratory information systems and client feedback information systems
xvi.	Whereas there is knowledge about the costs of investing in e-Health technologies in the region, the returns on investments is not adequately documented.

Recommendations

The 2nd EAC Regional e-Health and Telemedicine Ministerial Conference:

a) **urges the EAC Partner States that do not have a National e-Health Strategy develop it in line with the WHO - ITU National e-Health Strategy Toolkit by 2020;**

b) **directs EASTECO to conduct an EAC regional e-Health readiness assessment incorporating aspects of systems interoperability, costs and benefits of investing in e-Health by 30th December 2019 in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, East African Health Research Commission, Partner States' National Science and Technology Commissions/Councils and Partners;**

c) **directs EASTECO to promote incubation of local digital health solutions in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat and the Partner States' Ministries and Agencies responsible for ICT, Science, Technology and Innovation and submit progress reports to relevant Sectoral Councils and the Council of Ministers every two years;**

d) **Urges the Sectoral Council on Health to coordinate the development of regional policies, laws, regulations, guidelines, standards, on health facility/patient safety, data sharing, data security and privacy to facilitate e-health enabled in country and cross border patient referrals within the EAC Partner States by 30th June 2020**

e) **directs the EAC Regional Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and eHealth to conduct a study in the application of eLearning systems for training Health Professional in the Region and IUCEA to develop a regional framework to enhance regional and south-south collaboration in capacity building for e-Health by Jan 2020;**

f) **direct EASTECO to take leadership in convening the EAC regional e-health and telemedicine workshops, ministerial conferences and international exhibitions every two years on a rotational basis among the Partner States in last week of October as part of the meetings of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers responsible for Health in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, the EAHRC and the EAC Regional Center for Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and e-Health; and**

g) **approve hosting of the 3rd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine workshops, ministerial conferences and international exhibitions by the Republic of Uganda from 28th to 30th October 2020 as approved by the 16th Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health.**

The Honorable Ministers thanked the Republic of Rwanda for hosting the 2nd EAC regional e-health and telemedicine ministerial conference and international trade exhibition and for the warm and cordial hospitality accorded to them and the conference participants.

DONE AT KIGALI, THIS 17TH DAY OF MAY 2018

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Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi		**Dr. Patrick Ndimubanzi**	**Hon. Dr. Rashid Aman**	**Hon. Ummy A. Mwalimu (MP)**	
Minister of State for Health		**State Minister of Public and Primary Health**	**Chief Administrative Secretary**	**Minister**	
Ministry of Health	**Ministry of Health and Fight AIDS**	**Ministry of Health**	**Ministry of Health**	**Ministry of Health Community Development Gender Elderly and Children**	**Ministry of Health**
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA	**REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI**	**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**	**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**	**UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**	**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**