



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY EAST AFRICAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION (EASTECO)

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

17TH MAY 2018, Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village, Kigali, Republic of Rwanda

PRESS RELEASE

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, the EAC Secretariat and Partner States convened the 2nd EAC Regional e-Health and Telemedicine Ministerial Conference and International Trade Exhibition at the Kigali Conference 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 theme of the Conference was “*harnessing science, technology and innovation to transform healthcare delivery and accelerate the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in East Africa*”.

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, Republic of Rwanda. The Republic of Kenya was represented by Hon. Dr. Rashid Aman, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health, and Hon. Ken Obura, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of EAC and Northern Corridor Development. Hon. Umyy 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 EAC region and beyond.

In his opening remarks, the Chief Guest, Rt. Hon. Dr. Ali H. Kirunda Kivejinja, Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers 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”.

Hon. Kivejinja 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”.

In their deliberations, the Ministers noted that the 2nd eHealth conference built 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 Summit 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 State 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.

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

- a) urged 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) directed 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) directed 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) urged 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) directed 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) directed 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) approved 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.

Kigali, May 17th, 2018