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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2025 to implement the outcomes of the WSIS

Submission by

World Health Organization

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 29th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

WHO Report: Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): Action Line C7 on eHealth

Part One – Executive Summary

Throughout 2025, WHO and partners accelerated the implementation of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025, which was extended by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly through 2027 and will be succeeded by a new Global Strategy that will run from 2028–2033. Over 129 countries now have national digital health strategies, reflecting a 52 percent increase since 2015. Global and regional cooperation has deepened through initiatives such as the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH), the Global Digital Health Certification Network (GDHCN), and the Global Initiative on AI for Health (GI-AI4H), all promoting shared governance, interoperability, and ethical innovation.

Part Two – Trends, Achievements, and Barriers Since WSIS

Increased interest in Digitalization of the Health Sector as shown in the Global Consensus on the Renewal and Extension of the Global Strategy on Digital Health: On 23 May 2025, the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly extended the *Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025* to 2027 and requested the development of its successor for the period 2028–2033. This decision underscores the growing importance of digital health in building equitable, resilient, and people-centred health systems. The number of Member States with national digital health strategies has increased from 85 in 2015 to 129 in 2025, a 52% rise demonstrating strong national commitment to digital transformation. To support this progress, WHO has established a global repository of policies and strategies to foster knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Global Collaboration and Standardization: The Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH) has become a leading platform for country-led digital transformation, virtually convening over 1 000 stakeholders in 2025 during the annual GIDH convening established to exchange knowledge and align resources. SMART Guidelines are now available for eight primary health-care areas, including immunization and postnatal care, enabling machine-readable integration of WHO norms into digital systems. At the Regional Level, Data governance frameworks remain a priority theme. For example, in the African Region, the Health Informatics in Africa network (HELINA) and the Africa HealthTech Summit both emphasized the increased need for AI ethics, interoperability, and inclusive digital ecosystems.

Digital Public Infrastructure and Data Governance: Following the agreement on the Global Digital Compact, WHO and the ITU have progress in promoting digital public infrastructure (DPI). Member state have also started investing in DPIs. For example, at the 2025 WSIS Prize competition, the Zanzibar's Ministry of Health was awarded the WSIS prize in the health track for its national DPI model on client IDs. WHO and ITU launched a Focus Group on DPIs to guide countries in building secure, interoperable foundations for health data systems. Countries such as India and Japan are aligning DPIs for health with SDG targets on innovation and infrastructure. The Global Digital Health Certification Network (GDHCN) expanded to 80 countries, supporting mutual recognition of health credentials for over 1.5 billion people.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies: The Global Initiative on AI for Health (GI-AI4H) advanced in 2025 with 15 active working groups spanning ethics, regulation, open data, and key health domains such as maternal health and diagnostics. WHO and partners trained over 30 000 learners in AI

ethics and governance and co-organized policy dialogues from Singapore to Seoul and Bangkok. Regional activities expanded this agenda: The Western Pacific region co-hosted the AI Regulatory and International Symposium (AIRIS) 2025 with the Republic of Korea; The European region launched its Technical Advisory Group on AI (TAG-AI); and the Americas released an AI Readiness Toolkit and regional Q&A on AI for Public Health. The Africa region engaged 25 countries in AI capacity building, while Senegal's AI4PEP initiative demonstrated community-based AI surveillance under a One Health approach.

Regional Progress in Digital Transformation: Across WHO regions, governments have invested in workforce capacity, digital public infrastructure, knowledge sharing, guidance development, and responsible artificial intelligence. Some examples are listed below:

- **Africa:** Expanded national digital health strategies to 38 countries and delivered training in English and French to over 100 officials, strengthening capacity for digital health planning and AI governance.
- **The Americas:** Launched a Digital Literacy Programme, trained 70 000 health workers through its Virtual Campus, supported national strategies in Brazil and the Caribbean, and strengthened cyber-security and telehealth governance under the PAHO Forward 3.0 plan.
- **South-East Asia:** Continued to scale national initiatives such as India's Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Indonesia's SatuSehat ecosystem, advancing interoperable registries and telemedicine services.
- **Europe:** Deepened collaboration with the European Commission on data interoperability and cyber-security. Published five guidance documents, including on digital workforce uptake and health-data governance in the age of AI.
- **Eastern Mediterranean**: Launched its Regional Action Plan for Digital Health. Advanced digital health literacy as a regional flagship, training clinicians and integrating ICT into two-thirds of national health policies.
- **Western Pacific:** Endorsed a Regional Action Framework on Digital Health; supported country strategies in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu and collaborated with Transform Health on data-governance frameworks, while showcasing regional innovation through forums in Bangkok and Manila.

Obstacles and Challenges: persistent barriers include fragmented and donor-driven financing, limited digital skills among health workers, and governance gaps that expose health data to privacy risks. The 2024 Global Digital Health Monitor report identified workforce capacity as the least mature enabler, with 64 percent of countries in early development stages. Gender and equity gaps remain, with only 15 percent of countries implementing gender-specific digital health measures.

Part Three – Innovative Practices and Future Actions

Countries showcased a wide range of digital health innovations in 2025. While several examples are highlighted throughout the report, additional ones include: Ethiopia's finalization of its national digital health blueprint; Romania's launch of a digital professional registry; Panama and Cuba's expansion of national digital platforms and telemedicine networks; India and Indonesia's advancement of interoperable national ecosystems; and Saudi Arabia's Digital Health Wallet under the GDHCN, which has become a regional model for cross-border health credentials. ·Jordan and Egypt finalized their national digital health strategies in 2025 while Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan have moved to the stage of developing

targeted roadmaps. Finally, Qatar advanced its implementation of electronic health records, and continues to host the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) with a digital health focus.

Looking ahead, WHO, with guidance from Member States and input from partners, will co-create the next *Global Strategy on Digital Health (2028–2033)*, potentially expanding its scope to encompass data and artificial intelligence as interconnected strategic pillars. WHO will continue to scale the initiatives highlighted above, while placing greater emphasis on developing tools and approaches that embed equity, gender and rights considerations; strengthening governance and interoperability through digital public infrastructure; and mobilizing sustainable financing and country support through partnerships. Capacity-building efforts will also continue through WHO Academy programmes.