



**21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress  
Okinawa Japan, 16 June 2007**

## **Asia Pacific Telemedicine Initiative**

### **DECLARATION**

#### **Building eHealth Services in Developing Countries**

We, the representatives of many developing countries, declare our common desire and commitment to build eHealth care services in our countries in order to improve the quality of life, reduce child mortality and to combat diseases.

We recognize that the progress of Information and Communication Technologies opens completely new opportunities in the provision of healthcare. The capacity of these technologies to reduce many traditional obstacles, especially those of time and distance, makes it possible to use the potential of these technologies for the benefit of millions of people in all corners of the world.

We express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan, ITU-D Rapporteur's Group on Question 14, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, Nakajima Laboratory of Tokai University, NEC Corporation, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for the organization of this meeting on eHealth for developing countries.

The meeting was attended by more than 80 participants from the following 16 countries: Bhutan, Fiji, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, Vietnam, Ukraine, United States of America.

From 1994 on the request of the First World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-94), Study Group 2 of Development Sector in partnership with many International and Regional organizations is dealing with the study question on Telemedicine or Telecommunications for eHealth. Several reports have been successfully prepared and distributed to all Member States explaining benefits related to the introduction of eHealth services and solutions in medical practice. eHealth can significantly improve access to health care services, in particular for people living in rural and remote areas of developing countries.

During this time a strong network of telemedicine experts, members of study group from both developing and developed countries, has been created.

In May 2005 the General Assembly of the World Health Organization recognized officially eHealth as useful tool in medical practice and approved the Resolution WHA58.28 on eHealth recommended to all member states “to consider drawing up a long-term strategic plan for developing and implementing eHealth services in the various areas of health sector...” The success in the area of eHealth depends very much on good cooperation between two sectors, health care and telecommunication.

It was highlighted in the Resolution 41 of WTDC-02 in Istanbul. It was also recommended to set up national eHealth committee/task force dealing with eHealth applications.

It is important to have a political will of all governments to encourage the development and implementation of eHealth services and solutions.

Participants supported very strongly regional cooperation and proposed to consider several possibilities with respect to the development of practical and sustained operational settings, which could bring a true added value to health care delivery and services.

Participants recognized the need for business models and organizational approaches suitable and affordable for developing countries because their needs, their local possibilities as well as their cultural specificities have to be taken into account.

Participants recognized the value of mobile eHealth system to support telemedicine in rural and/or in emergency situation that were confirmed with successful experience of India, Japan, and Russian Federation.

Participants confirmed that there are many possibilities for private sector to be involved in the introduction and provision of eHealth services in developing countries.

Participants call upon all parties concerned to continue to support, in tangible ways, national and regional eHealth projects in developing countries, in particular in Pacific Rim countries, in collaboration with government, public, private, national and international partners.

The International and Regional Organizations have to promote and supported the introduction courses on telemedicine and e-Health in all training and educational programs of health-care professionals including doctors, nurses and technical staff, as for example ITU Telemedicine Expert Training Course hosted at Tokai

University, School of Telemedicine & Biomedical Informatics at SGPGIMS, Lucknow, India, Telemedicine Course at Holy Family Hospital in Pakistan.

### **The meeting recommended**

The awareness of new information/telecommunication technologies and in particular IP based solutions for eHealth applications have to be one of the main subjects of national/regional telemedicine projects and workshops/seminars.

The preparation of National eHealth Master Plan has to be one of the highest priority for all developing countries because it will help to coordinate and better use of available resources. This document has to be in line with the national health policy, including disease prevention and health promotion.

The aid agencies in developed countries such as USAID, Japanese ODA, AusAID, and others, are kindly invited to consider and to put more attention and priority to telemedicine projects in developing countries.

The International Telecommunication Union shall organize the development of several important issues related to the use of information and telecommunication technologies in health sector such as regulations (for example Universal Service Funds), standardizations and ethical and political issues including patent and copyright, for example open software, in order to promote telemedicine smoothly and with reasonable cost in developing countries.

The International Telecommunication Union shall recommend telecom authorities in all countries to provide suitable circuits free of charge to support rescue activities and/or to conduct disaster telemedicine activities on site during and after disaster.

Standardization initiatives in the field of eHealth made by some countries in the region may be presented by their authorities to the Study Group 16 in the ITU-T to be reviewed and used in the preparation of international standards on eHealth.

In order to identify the most cost effective ways of implementing eHealth services and solutions in developing countries, self-sustainability has to be considered.