



COMMUNIQUE FOR 1st Nigeria eHealth SUMMIT

The 1st Nigeria eHealth Summit was held on Thursday September 12, 2013 at the Eko Hotel Convention Centre, Lagos. The summit was organized in partnership with **Aajimatics, Anadach Group** and **Global Health Project & Resources**.

The summit was chaired by **Prof. Adedoyin Soyibo**, the renowned healthcare economist who has made a legendary impact on the Nigerian healthcare system.

The event was kicked off by welcome addresses made by **Mr. Adekunle Ajiboye, CEO, Aajimatics** and **Dr. Wale Alabi, Global Health Project & Resources**. They provided an overview of eHealth and its benefits to Nigeria. This was followed by **Prof. Soyibo's** presentation on how eHealth will positively impact the Nigerian Healthcare system. He also gave very beneficial insights in developing a national **eHealth Policy** for Nigeria.

The title of the first session was "*International Experience on eHealth Policy Development and Role of the Private Sector*". The discussants **Dr. Enoma Alade, Anadach Group** and **Mr. Sam Quarshie** of the **Ghana Health Services** both provided information on eHealth policy development and implementation from an international perspective. They also discussed the challenges encountered-such as resistance from employees; modification of implementation steps etc. Panelists **Dr. Olumide Okunola, IFC** and **Dr. Folarin Olowu, Intellifit** emphasized the need to involve people (users) and other stakeholders during the policy and software development stages. Dr. Okunola discussed the importance of "design thinking" prior to development of an eHealth policy and the financial constraints of the private sector. Dr. Olowu highlighted a few strategies to attract donor funding for eHealth development funding.

Prior to the second session, the country Director of **Sproxil, Dr. Henry Nwosu** made a presentation to showcase the eHealth product, *Sproxil*. This product is an SMS based Medication Authentication System which ensures original, non-fake medications are purchased by consumers.

The second session was themed "*Current State of Play-EHealth in Nigeria-Different Perspectives*". The discussants provided practical insights on the current state of eHealth. **Dr. Simpa Dania, Consultant, Health Informatics-University College Hospital**, Ibadan shared his experience implementing health informatics functionalities. **Dr. Bode Falase, Consultant/Senior Lecturer** provided a further insight as a clinician and how eHealth can impact his team. **Mr. Adepoju, Managing Editor, Health News NG**, provided an informative contribution from the non-health perspective. This was beneficial in understanding the impact eHealth has on other sectors.



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Dr. Olajide Adebola, President of the Society of Telemedicine and eHealth in Nigeria described the goal of the society and its accomplishments so far. He also highlighted challenges such as limited governmental support.

This was followed by the third session, the "*Challenges and Opportunities for the Private Sector*" was discussed. This session was chaired by **Dr. Anthony Omololu - President of AGPMPN. Dr. Awosika, CEO of Total Health Trust** provided the perspective from the health finance sub-sector. He stated several opportunities exist which will propel the health finance sub-sector. **Dr Adebite Ogunmokun, Medical Director, Eko Hospital** described the opportunities that exist for an effective eHealth system in his hospital. Such opportunities are documentation, quality assurance etc. and he also cited personnel, cost as some of the challenges. Dr. Lawrence Nwosu of Sproxil discussed the challenges and opportunities encountered in deployment of the SMS-based Authentication programme. He mentioned that further buy-in from stakeholders in both the private and public sectors will immensely expand acceptance of the programme. During his presentation, Dr Simpa Dania also discussed the challenges in the implementation of an eHealth system. Some of these challenges are funding, fragmented market, lack of computable data etc. **Mr. Akinbo Cornerstone the Acting Secretary and COO of the Nigerian Internet Registration Association (NIRA)** introduced the association and discussed its role in Nigeria including the development of an eHealth strategy. NIRA is an independent not-for-profit organization that manages the .ng country code.

The fourth session titled the "*Expanding health insurance coverage: Leveraging IT*" was chaired by **Dr. Yewande Adesina, the Special Adviser on Health, Lagos State Government.** Dr Adesina talked about the steps the Lagos State Government has taken to develop and implement an eHealth strategy. She mentioned that the government is willingly to collaborate with the private sector to ensure successful implementation of eHealth in the state.

Dr. Okunola of the IFC stated the need to improve access to healthcare in Nigeria by expanding health insurance coverage. He also iterated the IFC role and its desire to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure this is achieved in Nigeria. **Dr. Adenusi** from the **Hygeia Group** discussed how her organization has effectively utilized aspects of eHealth. She also noted that there is still more room for eHealth utilization to improve business practices. **Mr. Tunji Ashiru COO, Interswitch,** talked about the *Smarthealth* product and how it can provide low cost healthcare technology and products to HMOs and retail market. It can be utilized to facilitate payment and settlement of medical claims.

Dr. (Mrs.) Adenike Olaniba, President, Healthcare Providers of Nigeria stated on how information technology can be leveraged to expand health insurance coverage.



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She highlighted ten best ways for Health IT to improve the health of the population, enhance care and reduce costs or at least control-per capita costs

Dr. Pamela Ajayi, the **CEO of Pathcare** chaired the final session titled the “*Looking Ahead – Bright Future*”. Dr. Ajayi gave a brief overview of the session and stated the need to look ahead by engaging all the stakeholders of eHealth.

The speakers Mr. Ajiboye, CEO of Aajimatics and **Dr. Nicholas Omoregbe of Covenant University** both presented a high level overview of the eHealth ecosystem and the systems available. Dr. Omoregbe remarked the academia should be engaged during development of the national eHealth policy. He also stated that students and local developers should be encouraged to develop suitable applications.

The chair of the summit Prof. Adedoyin Soyibo, appealed to the attendees to all get involved in the development and implementation of an eHealth policy. He stated both the public and private sectors have roles to play to ensure success.

At the end of the summit, **Dr. Abdu Mukhtar an Advisory Board Member, Anadach Group**, gave the closing remarks and thanked all the attendees of the summit.

In conclusion, we can state that the status of eHealth in Nigeria should continue and move beyond discussions but to the next phase of strategy and policy development. This phase should involve fair representation from the private and public sectors including academia, etc. We also propose representation from other sectors including IT, Finance, Banking, and Telecommunications. This will provide an opportunity to learn from these sectors that have successful implemented eTechnologies and eCommerce.

The strategy development phase should be closely followed by implementation of the strategy. Implementation should commence with deployment of a pilot phase with measureable outcomes. This will ensure the viability and scalability of the pilot and identification of challenges prior to scale up.