



The Republic of Zambia

## **STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON AGENDA ITEM 18.6 DATA AND INNOVATION: DRAFT GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIGITAL HEALTH**

### **Chairperson,**

The Republic of Zambia aligns itself with the statement made by Ghana on pillar 4 (agenda item 18.6) and welcomes the report by the Director General on data and innovation: draft global strategy on digital health. We recognize that the purpose of the global strategy on digital health is to advance and apply digital technologies towards the vision of health for all

Zambia welcomes the guiding principles in the strategy that look to institutionalization of digital health in national health systems and the appropriate use of digital technologies. We have already adopted some of the principles by making eHealth an integral part of our health system and gone further to encompass all state actors by adopting an e-governance system that enhances monitoring capacity and accountability of service delivery. Thus, we concur with the need to develop standardized approaches for applying digital health in health systems and services, particularly addressing major impediments faced by least-developed countries implementing digital health technologies, and these have been addressed in this strategy.

Chairperson, we attest that increased access to information and communication technology assists in measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through improved health access and knowledge. For instance, Zambia was able to conduct the first ever mobile phone survey on non-communicable diseases and their risk factors in 2017. In addition, we have the mCervical program targeting women of reproductive age with messages of prevention and screening of cervical cancer.

However, such innovations should always take into consideration country level needs and strategic objectives. Digital platforms require colossal investment in capacity development, change management, infrastructure support and maintenance to derive the desired benefits thereof. In addition, investments in digital technologies should not disadvantage the traditional national health information architecture but rather improve such platforms.

Therefore, Zambia supports the adoption of the draft decision contained in document EB146/15.

I thank you