

**2009 Annual Ministerial Review of ECOSOC
Regional Ministerial Meeting for Africa
On “eHealth – use of information and communication technology for health”
10-11 June, Accra, Ghana**

**Closing statement by H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas,
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the UN
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing our deep appreciation and gratitude to our gracious hosts, the Government and People of Ghana.

I really enjoyed the traditional dance and the message from youth singers beaming with hope and the rich history of this country.

We have had most useful discussions over the past two days and produced strong messages on eHealth for the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva early next month.

We will thus head to the policy deliberations of ECOSOC on global public health with a deeper understanding of what eHealth can do to the achievement of the health-related MDGs and to the other Millennium Development Goals, on its applications and services ranging from supporting public health surveillance to personal health, health education and e-learning.

The African region has realized many goals in the area of health, but achievement of the MDGs remains a major challenge. Experiences from several countries in the region prove that the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved across Africa. Support for rapid scale-up of proven interventions as well as critically needed investments in basic healthcare systems needs however to be increased. We should not remain at the phase of pilots, as stated by one of the speakers : we need to scale up.

At this juncture, eHealth offers expanded opportunities to advance the health outcomes for the region. An unparalleled opportunity exists for Africa to act now and as one to craft a coherent and concerted response to capture the potential of eHealth. Your discussions have shown ways and means to make this happen. You have examined the challenges and opportunities represented by eHealth and ICTs and produced valuable insight on how policy development and practical measures can be used to improve their management, above all to improve the health condition in Africa. But this technological transformation has to be embedded in the overall development planning. eHealth cannot

and should not be pursued in isolation. It should be part and parcel of the overall health and development strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The meeting has, in my view, pointed to four major areas that require special attention.

Firstly, the need for infrastructure. This includes roads, electricity grids, broader and extensive internet access, schools, hospitals and primary care clinics.

Secondly, the need to develop human resources, especially in the area of health. Such human resources development could also focus on training ehealth experts.

Thirdly, the need for further strengthening of regional integration. This is particularly required in the health sector, including in the area of eHealth. Regional eHealth opens opportunities for rapid scaling up and also offers economies of scale.

Finally, the need for continuous and enhanced international support, and better integration in the global financial, trading and communication networks.

These messages should be carried not only to the Annual Ministerial Review on global public health next month, but also to the other high-level fora to be held this year to address health and development.

I look forward to Minister George Yankey's presentation to the Council, which, I hope, will lead to concrete follow-up actions.

I hope to see you all in Geneva.

Thank you very much and bon voyage.