Zanzibar Digital Health Strategy 2020/21-2024/25 – Overview and Steps Toward Implementation

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Introduction/Background: The Ministry of Health of Zanzibar has been working on its 5-year Digital Health Strategy, aiming at improving the provision of safer, equitable, accessible, efficient, and effective health services at all levels through proper use of affordable digital health technologies. It emphasizes a holistic approach for implementing appropriate and interoperable digital health solutions across the health sector.

Methods: The Zanzibar Digital Health Strategy has been informed by the broader national socio-economic development goals and health sector priorities, as well as by other national, regional and global strategies and guidelines, including the Zanzibar Vision 2050, the Zanzibar Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) IV 2020-2025, the Digital Regional East Africa Community (REACH) Initiative Strategic Plan 2019-2028 or the World Health Organization Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2024. The strategy was developed using participatory approaches that involved different stakeholders across all health system levels and beyond the health sector in Zanzibar.

Results: The Strategy describes the five-year strategic direction for the transformation of the entire health system to achieve the eight strategic objectives, including increasing the use of client-level systems that facilitate delivery of safe and quality health care; and strengthening digital health governance and leadership across the health sector. The following principles will guide the implementation of the strategy: design with users for the improved experience; data-driven decision making; harness open standards, open data, open-source, and open innovation; build for scale-up and sustainability; build for local ownership; protect data, patient privacy, and confidentiality; and compliance to national policies, legal and regulatory frameworks.

Conclusion: The strategy was launched in September 2020. Its implementation progress will be tracked by a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework. This presentation gives an overview of the strategy and outlines the steps being taken toward its implementation.