

World Bank And Pfizer Announce Initiative To Help Improve Healthcare Delivery In Developing Countries

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Partners Create Funding Mechanism to Expedite Identification of Gaps in Pharmaceutical Supply Chain and Implement Solutions

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[\(BUSINESS WIRE\)](#)--The World Bank and Pfizer Inc. today announced they will collaborate to improve the healthcare infrastructure, specifically the supply chain, in developing countries, starting with Africa. The novel public-private collaboration will focus on enhanced use of Information and Communication Technologies' (ICT) transformative power to improve healthcare delivery. The project demonstrates both Pfizer's and the World Bank's commitment to improving healthcare delivery by creating a funding mechanism to expedite the identification of gaps in Africa's healthcare infrastructure and ultimately aid in the implementation of ICT solutions.

The effort will be part of the World Bank's new eTransform Initiative, which was formally launched today at a World Bank Spring Meeting side event attended by developing country ministers of finance and communications. The eTransform Initiative aims to convene public and private sector stakeholders to promote government transformation through the use of innovative ICTs. The goal is to use technology to increase government effectiveness and help governments in developing countries use their healthcare and other resources more efficiently.

About 270 million people in Africa lack regular access to even the most essential medicines.¹ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), among the biggest obstacles to improved health outcomes are inadequate health delivery and financing mechanisms that place the heaviest burden on the poor and sick, who are the least able to pay.

"We recognize the importance of improving healthcare infrastructure in developing countries so more patients can have access to life-saving medicines," said Jean-Michel Halfon, president and general manager of Pfizer's Emerging Markets Business Unit. "This collaboration is the most recent example of Pfizer's Global Access strategy to improve healthcare access for low-income populations in emerging markets through non-traditional approaches that will contribute towards the development of commercially viable, sustainable delivery models."

The eTransform Initiative helps access global expertise through peer-to-peer networks of industry innovators and country leaders, and through a knowledge bank. It also establishes a mechanism to fast-track promising projects by funding their initial design. Under the eTransform Initiative, the World Bank and Pfizer will work together on knowledge-sharing initiatives. They will also work to set up a trust fund to finance innovative, ICT-based solutions to healthcare in developing countries.

The funding mechanism, or Healthcare Project Development Facility (HPDF), will be one of several sector-specific project development facilities within the eTransform Initiative. The HPDF entails that countries submit grant requests to support a competitively-bid feasibility study. Study outcomes serve as the basis for proposed solutions and, if accepted by the country and eligible for World Bank funding, the solution will be implemented on a country level.

The collaboration will focus on Africa in the initial phase. Africa is the world's fastest growing cellular market, with about 400 million mobile phones in use.² "With billions of people in the developing world having access to reliable technology, such as mobile communications, there is a tremendous opportunity to use technology to radically improve healthcare delivery," said Mohsen Khalil, director of the World Bank's Global Information and Communication Technologies Department. "Through public-private collaborations, which bring together global expertise, appropriate technologies, efficient processes, and necessary financial resources, the potential of health and technology can be fully realized."

The collaboration will focus on supporting the eTransform Initiative through studies or pilots that improve healthcare infrastructure and sharing global knowledge about technology in developing countries, including the use of mobile applications.

"We understand that to truly make a difference in the lives of low-income people in emerging markets, we first need research-based evidence to identify and better understand the existing capabilities and needs of a country to improve healthcare access for its people," said Ponni Subbiah, vice president, Pfizer Global Access.

The World Bank

The World Bank is a multilateral development institution and one of the world's largest sources of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. Comprised of 185 member governments, its primary focus is to help the world's poorest people and the poorest countries. The World Bank uses its financial resources, its staff, and extensive experience to help developing countries reduce poverty, increase economic growth, and improve their quality of life. The World Bank is partnering with the ICT industry to leverage technology as an enabler in the context of the ICT Skills Development Initiative and the eTransform Initiative.

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At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to improve health and well-being at every stage of life. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacturing of medicines for people and animals. Our diversified global health care portfolio includes human and animal biologic and small molecule medicines and vaccines, as well as nutritional products and many of the world's best-known consumer products. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as the world's leading biopharmaceutical company, we also collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 150 years, Pfizer has worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. To learn more about our commitments, please visit us at www.pfizer.com

¹ BMJ 2005; 331:709-10.

² "[Africa: 448 million mobile network subscribers.](#)" Africa News. February 11, 2010.

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