



## Country Ownership Strategies: Leadership Forum on Health Information Systems

### PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
July 31, 2009

Contact: Negash Teklu  
Media Onsite Coordinator  
+251 911 201968  
negashtklu@yahoo.com

### Health Information Systems Improved And Sustained through Country Ownership

A leadership forum focused on country ownership of health information systems will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, August 10-12, at the UN Conference Center. The keynote speaker will be Andrew Mwenda, a well-known Ugandan journalist, who currently heads *The Independent*, a publication he launched in 2007.

Health information systems (HIS) are a vital component of strong and effective health care programs around the globe. HIS need to be tailored to the specific needs and capabilities of each nation. Simultaneously, such systems should be designed for easy access and interoperability within and among countries. Unfortunately, too many systems lack leadership support, resources (financial, technological, staffing), credibility, easy use, and sustainability.

The intent of forum organizers is to support country efforts a) for national institutions to take ownership and lead in the direction and management of HIS; b) to plan, coordinate, and manage the process of strengthening HIS; and c) to work more effectively with donors and commercial interests in building long-term, sustainable information systems.

In an innovative approach to helping the global community strengthen their respective health information systems, key global health partners and donors are convening this forum to address this crucial leadership challenge. Top policymakers from four ministries in six African nations have been invited to participate as country delegates. The goal of the forum is to help each delegation create a workable action plan to deal with the managerial challenges of institutionalizing health information systems in their countries.

Participating countries will include Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Representatives from international partner organizations and forum co-sponsors will also participate. Forum sponsors include the US Agency for International Development; The World Bank; World Health Organization; Health Metrics Network; UN International Telecommunication Union; East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Support is provided by USAID-funded projects – Health Systems 20/20, Health Policy Initiative, and Analysis, Information Management and Communications Activity – and Touchstone Consulting Group, Inc.

