Transform Health asks for the G20 in 2021

Transform Health is a global coalition of organisations dedicated to ensuring that governments harness the power of digital technologies and data to support universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed **weaknesses of health systems** across the world, and further exacerbated the **digital divide** that prevents billions of people from accessing essential services, staying connected, and fully participating in the economy. Transform Health therefore welcomes the Italian Presidency's focus on building a better and brighter future after the COVID-19 pandemic, and its recognition of the **opportunities presented by the digital revolution to make health services more effective** and to achieve prosperity and a better quality of life for all.

Investing in **equitable, strong, resilient and digitally-enabled health systems** that support UHC is the best defence against the spread of future global health crises. Across all countries and contexts there is extraordinary **potential to leverage digital technologies and data to increase access to healthcare**, build strong and resilient health systems, and accelerate progress towards UHC. This potential is not being realised because of **insufficient political will and resources** to reform health systems in ways that can maximise the use of digital technologies and data to respond to the health needs of the entire population.

Weak governance of digital technologies and data, and underinvestment in the foundational building blocks for digital health such as **ICT infrastructure**, and **digital literacy and skills** is creating a divide between those who can benefit from the latest digital health services and those who cannot. Furthermore, current approaches to digital health are not fully aligned to agreed global values and principles such as equity, human rights, and inclusion.

Through the aligned efforts of its Health and Digital Economy working groups, **the G20 has an opportunity to push for more equitable and inclusive digital transformations of health**, both within G20 nations and globally, and to prevent digitalisation becoming a driver of inequality. The G20 should lead a coordinated global approach to digital transformation of health systems and the use of health data that supports public health goals. G20 members should support low and middle-income countries (LMICs) to invest in digital technology and the use of data that will enable them to provide UHC to their populations. The G20 is also strongly positioned to push for stronger governance of digital health technologies and data so that their public health benefits can be maximised whilst tackling inequities and protecting individual rights.

Recommendations

As part of a comprehensive effort to build back better after COVID-19, and to accelerate progress towards UHC and the Sustainable Development Goals, Transform Health encourages G20 members to work domestically and internationally to:

1 **Invest in people-centred digitally-enabled health systems** to achieve UHC, build resilience against pandemics and support LMICs to address bottlenecks in the implementation of national digital health strategies.

2 **Reduce the digital divide** within and between countries by investing in:
- Connecting all health facilities and households to reliable and affordable internet so they can take full advantage of digital health tools.
- Equipping individuals, including health workers, with digital literacy and skills to effectively and safely use digital technologies.

3 Develop and adopt inclusive **global governance frameworks for digital health and data** that are guided by a core set of principles such as equity and human rights.

4 Establish mechanisms for more **coordinated and effective international funding of digital health** in LMICs that aligns with aid effectiveness principles.