# Conclusion

Participants at the Commonwealth Secretariat's dialogues on e-health consistently highlighted their needs in preparing policies and strategies for e-health in their countries. The Commonwealth Secretariat welcomed their proposal to prepare a generic workbook for widespread use.

You can use the workbook in many different ways. You can use it to help you to make decisions for your e-health strategy and to identify the policy issues that you need to address. It is best to use it in workshops with a team of people from many different backgrounds, such as senior civil servants responsible for health, healthcare, ICT and finance; doctors; nurses; healthcare managers; ICT managers; and ICT suppliers. A team like this often has different views and ideas and using the workbook can help to put these together.

You can use this workbook to as a checklist for the agenda and topics for the team. You can use the parts that are most important to you and you can change and add to the templates so they fit your precise needs better. The templates are designed for users to modify easily and are available in Microsoft Word from the Secretariat's website http://www.thecommonwealth.org/ehealth

Rarely are e-health policies and strategies completed once for a five to ten year period. New techniques and technologies emerge rapidly and sometimes unexpectedly; for example, some telemedicine initiatives are feasible as part of m-health projects, so would probably not be part of an e-health strategy written five years ago.

The e-health dialogues revealed two important matters relevant to the way that you use the workbook. One is that countries are at very different positions and stages of e-health development, so they will begin from different places as they construct their e-health policies and strategies. Second, there are many people in each country with considerable skills and expertise in a wide range of e-health activities. They provide the essential sources of leadership and knowledge, and this workbook will help them to marshal and review their ideas, decisions and priorities in collaboration with their colleagues. These skilled teams are the source of your e-health policies and strategies.

# References

Africa Health Infoway: http://www.who.int/africahealthinfoway/en/index.html [last accessed 20 July 2010].

Amarasingham, R, L Plantinga, M Diener-West, D J Gaskin and N R Powe (2009) *Clinical Information Technologies and Inpatient Outcomes: A Multiple Hospital Study.* Archives of Internal Medicine, 169(2) pp.108–114. Available at: http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/169/2/108 [last accessed 20 July 2010].

Commission of the European Communities (CEC) (2004) *e-Health – making healthcare better for European citizens: An action plan for a European e-Health Area*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/doc/qualif/health/COM_2004_0356_F_EN_ACTE.pdf [last accessed 17 July 2010].

Commonwealth Secretariat (2009a) *e-health Capacity Assessment – e-health Situation Analysis Questionnaire*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat. Available at: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/ehealth

Commonwealth Secretariat (2009b) Proposals and Business Case Templates for e-health Projects in Commonwealth Countries 20 April 2009. London: Commonwealth Secretariat. Available at: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/ehealth

Dobrev, A, T Jones, V N Stroetmann, K A Stroetmann, Y Vatter and K Peng (2009) *The socio-economic impact of interoperable electronic health record (EHR) and ePrescribing systems in Europe and beyond*. European Commission. Available at: http://www.ehr-impact.eu/downloads/documents/EHRI_final_report_2009.pdf [last accessed 20 July 2010].

EC (2007) eHealth Impact Project, Directorate General Information Society and Media. Brussels: EC. Available at: http://www.ehealth-impact.org/ [last accessed 17 July 2010].

EC (2009a) Electronic Health Record and ePrescribing Project. Brussels: Directorate General Information Society and Media, EC. Available at: www.ehr-impact.eu [last accessed 17 July 2010].

EC (2009b) Boosting E-Health Investment, Directorate General Information Society and Media. Brussels: EC. Available at: www.financing-ehealth.eu [last accessed 17 July 2010].

European Commission Information Society and Media Directorate-General (EC ISMDG) (2007) Accelerating the Development of the eHealth Market in Europe, eHealth Task Force Report.

Goldsbrough, D, E Adovor and B Eldberger (2007) *What has happened to health spending and fiscal flexibility in low-income countries with IMF programs?* Working Group on IMF Programs and Health Expenditures, Center for Global Development, April 2007.

Jones, T, A Dobrev, K Stroetmann, V Stroetmann, P Wilson and P Drury (2008) *E-Health for Developing Countries: Affordable Strategies*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat. Available at: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/files/177214/FileName/HMM_G__08_3-EHealthforDevelopingCountries_2_.pdf [last accessed 21 July 2010].

Kamunyo, P (undated) Quality Care and Cost Containment Making Private Health Insurance More Affordable, AKI Presentation.

Otieno, G (2006) Nokia Mobile Authentication Solution, presentation 19 December 2006.

The Rockefeller Foundation (RF) (2008) Bellagio E-Health Call to Action. Available at: http://www.ehealth-connection.org/content/bellagio-ehealth-call-action [last accessed 17 July 2010].

Scott, N, S Batchelor, J Ridley and B Jorgensen (2004) *The Impact of Mobile Phones in Africa*. Commission for Africa, November 2004.

Stroetmann, KA, T Jones, A Dobrev and V N Stroetmann (2006) *eHealth is Worth it: The economic benefits of implemented eHealth solutions at ten European sites*. European Commission Information Society and Media Directorate General. Available at: http://www.ehealthimpact.org/download/documents/ehealthimpactsept2006.pdf [last accessed 20 July 2010].

United Nations Foundation/Vodafone Foundation (UNF/VF) (undated) *mHealth for Development: The Opportunity of Mobile Technology for Healthcare in the Developing World*, Factsheet. Available from: http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions-files.org/unf_website/assets/publications/technology/mhealth/mHealth_for_Development_Report_1Pager.pdf [last accessed 20 July 2010].

WHO (2005) *Connecting for Health: Global Vision, Local Insight*, Report on the World Summit for the Information Society, ISBN 92 4 159390 3. Available at: http://www.who.int/kms/resources/WSISReport_Connecting_for_Health.pdf [last accessed 17 July 2010].

WHO (2006a) *Electronic Health Records: A Manual for Developing Countries*, ISBN 92 9061 2177. Available at: http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/5753F8CF-8A78-4639-BEFC-F0EE-9B3CBA0A/0/EHRmanual.pdf [last accessed 17 July 2010].

WHO (2006b) *eHealth Tools and Services: Needs of the Member States*, Report of the WHO Global Observatory for E-Health. Available at: http://www.who.int/kms/initiatives/tools_and_services_final.pdf [last accessed 17 July 2010].

WHO (2006c) *Building foundations for eHealth*, Report of the WHO Global Observatory for E-Health, ISBN 978 92 4 159504 9. Available at: http://www.who.int/goe/publications/

WHO (2007) *Everybody's Business: Strengthening Health Systems to Improve Health Outcomes*, WHO's Framework for Action, ISBN 978 92 4 159607 7. Available at: http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/5BA80B95-DC1F-4427-8E8B-0D9B1E9AF776/0/EB.pdf [last accessed 17 July 2010].

Yunkap Kwankam, S and RJ Richardson (2007) 'Improving health in the Commonwealth: the role and importance of e-health as an enabling environment', *Commonwealth Health Ministers Reference Book 2007*. London: Henley Media Group for the Commonwealth Secretariat.