REGIONAL REPORTS
HELINA: HEALTH INFORMATICS IN AFRICA
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HELINA Secretariat, Governing Board and General Assembly

HELINA council is delighted to announce the launch of the new website www.helina-online.org. A major concern of the council remains however the organization and the funding of a permanent HELINA secretary. A draft proposal has been made and is being discussed within the board.

The council has continued to collaborate with major institution in Africa. According to this, the council actively contributed to the Expert Meeting on eHealth and Telemedicine Harmonisation in Africa organized by the Department of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission. This meeting took place at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from February 28 to March 1st 2011. The experts therefore suggested an approach which is for the AU Commission to prepare a strategic framework for eHealth development in the African Region, to support implementation of the Africa Health Strategy 2007-2015. This framework, if followed in and across countries, would lead to eHealth initiatives and projects which adhere to certain common principles. The initiatives would:

- be consistent with the objectives of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and leverage instruments such as the National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) and Sectoral Information and Communication Infrastructure (SICI) processes;
- be needs-driven and evidence-based;
- subscribe to international norms and standards;
- be founded on agreed upon enterprise architectures.

The HELINA council has also contributed to this initiative and will adapt the AU Strategic document on eHealth.1

HELINA 2011

The seventh Health Informatics in Africa Conference - HELINA 2011 Conference planned to take place in Yaoundé Cameroon from the 28th to the 30th of November 2011 will be hosted by the Cameroonian Health Informatics Society (CAHIS). CAHIS is the national platform for health informatics activities in Cameroon with membership drawn from corporate bodies, professionals and researchers involved in Health and Medical Informatics in Cameroon from within and outside the country. The organization is a member of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) and the Pan African Health Informatics in Africa Association

The theme of the conference is:
“Health Information Systems: Scaling up solutions to transform healthcare delivery in Africa”

The conference objectives include:
- To promote the development of an eHealth strategy for Africa and eHealth policies in African countries
- To foster the creation of networks between African Countries as well as eHealth initiatives in Africa
- To establish best practices guidelines for the implementation of Health Informatics applications in Africa
- To foster the development of Health Informatics research and education in Africa

Specific themes of the conference include:
- Health Informatics and the private sector (collaboration, economic perspectives, case studies, etc.)
- Health Informatics research and implementation
- Health Informatics design and education
- Health Informatics in the Public Sector (policy, universal health coverage, finance, health insurance, case studies, etc.)

Website: http://www.helina-online.org

Activities in HELINA Region

The French speaking members of HELINA have organized on March 1st 2011 a sub-regional conference – Journée d’Informatique Médicale en Afrique de l’Ouest (JIMAO) in Bamako, Mali. JIMAO was co-organized by the Société Malienne d’Informatique Biomédicale et de santé (SOMIBS), the Société Ivoirienne de Biosciences et d’Informatique Médicale (SIBIM), the Société Camerounaise d’Informatique Médicale (SOCIM), the Société Burkinabé de communication et d’Informatique Médicale (SOBCIM), and the Association Togolaise d’Informatique Médicale et de Télémédecine (ATIM-TELEMED).

After the successful organization of MEDINFO 2010, the South African Health Informatics Association (SAHIA) is organizing the 2011 national conference HISA from August 29 to 30 in Johannesburg.

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