

# 71<sup>st</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA71)

## Agenda item 12.4 (mHealth): Use of appropriate digital technologies for public health (Document A71/20)

FDI World Dental Federation is the official representative body of over one million dentists worldwide.

We thank the Secretariat for its report and welcome the attention brought to mHealth – a rapidly growing area of innovation.

We are encouraged to learn that 121 countries have now adopted national eHealth strategies. We call upon more member states to implement national eHealth strategies and, in doing so, consult with their national dental associations so that digital oral health programmes are better integrated. FDI is actively engaged in developing new digital solutions to improve oral health outcomes.

We congratulate the Secretariat on its leadership in developing and implementing mHealth programmes as detailed in Clause 12 of the report. Not only does mHealth play a crucial role in improving healthcare delivery, it also has the potential to collate information on knowledge gaps.

Recognizing the need to identify and evaluate gaps in oral healthcare needs, FDI established the Oral Health Observatory (OHO). OHO has developed a mobile app that analyzes the oral healthcare needs of patients and dental practitioners at the national and global level. By answering a series of questions, the app allows patients and dentists to submit data about oral health status, quality of life, health habits and other health determinants. We are currently collecting the data and will start releasing the results later this year. Such standardized data are scarce. We expect it will be a valuable resource for policymakers as they develop oral health programmes and integrate oral health into existing mHealth services.

We also welcome WHO's new priorities for mHealth in Clause 13, especially building capacity and empowering healthcare professionals. We urge all countries to provide oral health education and training to other healthcare professionals, so that oral health is integrated into health services and overall health outcomes are improved.