

# ANDRE MALRAUX MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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**“Healthcare in regions with a  
low connectivity rate”**

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## **Historical background and current situation**

Although the quantity rather than quality of health services has been the focus historically in developing countries, ample evidence suggests that quality of care (or the lack of it) must be at the center of every discussion about better health.

In recent decades, African countries have designed ambitious policies aimed at boosting education, health, access to water, labour market opportunities and other factors that improve quality of life. While most countries have made advances in at least one area, progress has not been sufficient. Overall poverty rates are still hovering around 43%. By some estimates, more than half of Africa's youth are unemployed, underemployed or inactive. Health and education outcomes are among the lowest in the world and the continent's population has insufficient access to sanitation and safe drinking water. While economic growth has been relatively strong, it has not been rapid or inclusive enough to create jobs and improve the health of Africans who need to see the benefits of economic growth in their daily lives.

Moreover, health systems in low and middle-income countries continue to face considerable challenges in providing high-quality, affordable and universally accessible care. In response, policy-makers, donors, and program implementers are searching for innovative approaches to eliminate the geographic and financial barriers to health.

However, it is widely recognized that technology can improve the health of populations in countries around the world: it is at the forefront of innovation in low, middle, and high-income countries. The importance of technology in healthcare is becoming increasingly evident.

## **UN involvement**

- Resolution 60.29 of the World Health Assembly commented that Health Technologies are "indispensable for effective and efficient prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases."
- In 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched its second Global Health Initiative, calling for affordable and practical technology for low and middle-income countries. The UN development goal aims to deliver "universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020."

## **Countries involved**

South Africa: In South Africa, where access to relevant health literature and broadband Internet access is limited, nurses and doctors in the Eastern Cape Province now use 3G wireless technology to overcome access-to-information challenges and provide better care to their patients.

China: The Mobile Vision healthcare program 18 began in October 2011 in rural China's Hebei Province with the aim to help prevent lifelong vision disabilities. This project utilizes a 3G-enabled mobile application, smartphones and 3G wireless connectivity to assist doctors in the collection and archiving of information related to the screening and treatment of children with amblyopia.

Canada: The federal government has transferred \$3 billion to the provinces since 2000 in an effort to improve the availability of medical technology

## **Questions to consider**

-How can high tech innovations improve the health of people living in regions with a low connectivity rate such as Africa?

-Will there be a form of delay in medicine for countries that have a low connectivity rate?

-How can we increase competitiveness between countries with low connectivity rate and countries with high connectivity rate?

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