

ROUNDTABLE ON OPERATIONALISING DIGITAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA

Theme

Aligning DTH-Lab's Framework for Digitally Enabled Health Systems with Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy: Advancing Public-Private Partnerships to Scale Digital Health



A SIDE-EVENT AT THE

6TH AFRICA DIGITAL
HEALTH SUMMIT

(ADHS 2026)

Abuja, Nigeria
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REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to accelerate the implementation of Nigeria's digital health agenda and strengthen collaboration within the health ecosystem, the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (hfn), in collaboration with the Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab), the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMoH), and the Nigeria Digital in Health Initiative (NDHI), convened a High-Level Stakeholder Roundtable on Operationalising Digital Health Transformation: Aligning DTH-Lab's Framework for Digitally Enabled Health Systems (DEHS) that address the needs of young people with Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy and Advancing Public-Private Partnerships for Digital Health Scale.

Held as a side event at the 6th Africa Digital Health Summit (ADHS 2026), the roundtable brought together senior government officials, regulators, development partners, private sector leaders, academia, digital health innovators, healthcare providers, youth representatives, and international organisations to identify practical pathways for advancing digitally enabled, people-centred health systems in Nigeria.

The discussions examined how DTH-Lab's Framework for DEHS that address the needs of young people can strengthen the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy by embedding the needs and perspectives of young people into digital health governance, service delivery, and system design. Participants emphasised that digital transformation must extend beyond the deployment of technology to encompass strong governance, interoperable digital infrastructure, trusted data systems, workforce capacity, sustainable financing, and meaningful public-private collaboration.

A recurring theme throughout the roundtable was the recognition that young people should not be viewed solely as beneficiaries of digital health interventions, but as active partners, co-creators, innovators, and decision-makers. Participants advocated for institutionalising youth participation through structured governance mechanisms while ensuring that digital health solutions are intentionally designed to address the realities, expectations, and health priorities of Nigeria's youth population.

The roundtable also underscored the importance of accelerating the implementation of foundational components of Nigeria's digital health ecosystem, including the National Digital Health Architecture, Health Information Exchange (HIE), national registries, interoperable standards, digital public infrastructure, and robust governance frameworks for privacy, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. Participants agreed that achieving sustainable digital health transformation will require coordinated leadership, clear accountability mechanisms, strategic investments, and stronger collaboration among government, development partners, technology providers, healthcare institutions, academia, and the private sector.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to advancing practical actions that move Nigeria beyond fragmented digital health initiatives towards an integrated, people-centred, and resilient digital health ecosystem. The insights generated through the dialogue will contribute to the contextualisation of DTH-Lab's Framework for DEHS that address the needs of young people within Nigeria and inform future policy recommendations aimed at strengthening digital health implementation and scaling innovation across the country's health system.



1. Background

Nigeria is undergoing a significant digital transformation across multiple sectors, with healthcare increasingly recognised as a priority area for innovation, improved service delivery, and stronger health system performance. The growing adoption of digital technologies presents an opportunity to address persistent health system challenges, enhance access to quality healthcare, strengthen health information management, and improve patient outcomes. At the same time, it underscores the need for coordinated governance, interoperable digital infrastructure, robust regulatory frameworks, and sustained collaboration among public and private sector stakeholders.

With more than 160 million people under the age of 30, Nigeria has one of the youngest populations globally. Young people constitute one of the country's most active groups of digital technology users, yet their perspectives, needs, and lived experiences have not always been systematically reflected in the design, governance, and implementation of digital health systems. As a result, important issues such as mental health, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, privacy, trust, affordability, and equitable access to healthcare continue to present significant challenges for young people navigating the health system.

Recognising this gap, the **Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab)** developed the **Framework for Digitally Enabled Health Systems (DEHS)** as a practical resource to support national health leaders in intentionally embedding young people's needs across the core building blocks of digital health systems. Rather than focusing solely on technology adoption, the Framework promotes a holistic approach encompassing governance, service delivery, community engagement, digital trust, interoperability, workforce development, and inclusive participation. The Framework seeks to complement national priorities by supporting countries in designing people-centred, resilient, and digitally enabled health systems.

Against this backdrop, the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN), in partnership with DTH-Lab, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMoH), and the Nigeria Digital in Health Initiative (NDHI), convened a High-Level Stakeholder Roundtable as a side event at the 6th Africa Digital Health Summit (ADHS 2026). The roundtable provided a strategic platform for senior government officials, regulators, development partners, healthcare providers, technology companies, academia, youth representatives, and private sector leaders to examine how the Framework can strengthen the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy while advancing public-private partnerships for digital health scale.

The discussions were also timely given Nigeria's ongoing efforts to strengthen foundational digital health components, including the National Digital Health Strategy, National Digital Health Architecture, Health Information Exchange (HIE), national registries, and the broader Digital Public Infrastructure agenda.

Participants recognised that translating these national ambitions into measurable health outcomes will require coordinated national leadership, meaningful youth engagement, interoperable systems, trusted governance, sustained investment, and stronger collaboration across sectors. It was within this context that the roundtable sought to identify practical pathways for operationalising digitally enabled health systems that are responsive to Nigeria's current realities and future healthcare needs.

Objectives of the Roundtable

The Stakeholder Roundtable was convened to facilitate strategic dialogue on the operationalisation of digitally enabled health systems in Nigeria by examining how DTH-Lab's Framework for DEHS that address the needs of young people can support the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy. Specifically, the roundtable sought to:

- **Introduce DTH-Lab's Framework for Digitally Enabled Health Systems** as a practical resource for supporting the design, governance, and implementation of digitally enabled, people-centred health systems, with particular emphasis on the health and well-being of young people.
- **Discuss how the Framework can support the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy** by complementing existing national priorities, policies, and ongoing digital health reform efforts, while identifying opportunities for alignment and collaboration.

- **Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue** among government institutions, development partners, private sector organisations, academia, healthcare providers, technology innovators, and youth representatives on practical pathways for accelerating digital health transformation in Nigeria.
- **Identify policy, institutional, technical, financing, and governance priorities** required to strengthen the implementation and long-term sustainability of Nigeria's digital health ecosystem, including interoperability, digital public infrastructure, workforce capacity, digital trust, and responsible innovation.
- **Strengthen collaboration and public-private partnerships** by fostering shared understanding, coordinated action, and collective ownership among stakeholders working to scale digital health solutions across Nigeria's health system.
- **Promote meaningful youth participation** by exploring mechanisms for embedding young people as partners, co-creators, innovators, and decision-makers throughout digital health policy development, programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Generate actionable recommendations that will inform the contextualisation of DTH-Lab's Framework** for Digitally Enabled Health Systems within Nigeria and contribute to future policy development, implementation strategies, and advocacy efforts aimed at building a resilient, inclusive, and digitally enabled health system.

2. Opening Session

The High-Level Stakeholder Roundtable was opened by Reagan Rowland, Founder of OneClick Medical and Treasurer of the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN), who welcomed participants and set the tone for the day's dialogue. He emphasised the importance of bringing together leaders from across government, the private sector, development organisations, academia, and the broader digital health ecosystem to collectively explore practical approaches for advancing Nigeria's digital health transformation through stronger collaboration and shared commitment.



This was followed by a presentation of DTH-Lab's Framework for Digitally Enabled Health Systems (DEHS) that address the needs of young people by Tomiwa Akinsanya, Project and Events Coordinator at the Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab). She explained that the Framework was developed through extensive consultations with more than 600 young people across 80+ countries and is intended to serve as a practical resource for governments and health system leaders in designing digitally enabled health systems that intentionally respond to the needs, realities, and aspirations of young people.

Rather than positioning young people solely as beneficiaries of digital health interventions, the Framework recognises them as innovators, co-creators, early adopters, and future leaders whose perspectives should be embedded across governance, service delivery, programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The presentation further highlighted that digital technologies have become an increasingly important determinant of health and that meaningful digital transformation requires more than the adoption of technology. It calls for integrated approaches that combine trusted governance, interoperable digital infrastructure, digital literacy, workforce capacity, community engagement, and strong partnerships to create people-centred and sustainable health systems. The Framework also seeks to complement national priorities by supporting the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy while strengthening the country's broader digital health ecosystem.



Following the presentation, Professor Fatima Kyari, Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), delivered remarks that anchored the discussion in the practical realities of implementation. While acknowledging the transformative potential of digitally enabled health systems, she emphasised the importance of translating strategic frameworks into measurable improvements in healthcare delivery and outcomes.

Her remarks encouraged participants to consider the practical pathways, implementation experiences, and collaborative actions required to move from policy aspirations to tangible impact. She further underscored the need for sustained collaboration among government, the private sector, development partners, academia, and civil society to ensure that digital health innovations are effectively integrated into Nigeria's health system and deliver meaningful benefits for citizens, particularly young people.



The roundtable discussions were subsequently moderated by Njide Ndili, President of the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN); Founding Member, DTH-Lab; and Country Director, PharmAccess Nigeria, alongside Dr Gbenga Ijaodola, National Programme Manager of the Nigeria Digital in Health Initiative (NDHI).

Through two interactive discussion sessions, they guided participants in examining how DTH-Lab's Framework could support the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Strategy, while encouraging the exchange of practical experiences, policy perspectives, and implementation lessons from across government, development organisations, the private sector, academia, healthcare institutions, and youth representatives.

3. Roundtable Discussions

The roundtable featured two interactive discussion sessions that brought together perspectives from government institutions, regulatory agencies, development partners, the private sector, healthcare providers, academia, youth representatives, and technology innovators. While discussions covered a broad range of issues relating to digital health transformation, a number of recurring themes emerged that collectively defined the pathway towards building a digitally enabled, inclusive, and sustainable health system for Nigeria.

3.1 Youth as Co-Creators in Digital Health Transformation

A dominant theme throughout the discussions was the need to reposition young people from passive beneficiaries of healthcare services to active partners in shaping Nigeria's digital health future. Participants recognised that, with over 160 million Nigerians below the age of 30, young people represent not only the country's largest demographic but also its most digitally connected population. Consequently, digital health systems must be intentionally designed around their realities, health priorities, and expectations.

Participants observed that many existing digital health interventions fail to adequately address issues that disproportionately affect young people, including mental health, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, nutrition, preventive healthcare, and access to trusted health information. It was further noted that concerns relating to privacy, confidentiality, affordability, stigma, and limited awareness continue to discourage young people from engaging with available digital health services.

The discussions strongly advocated for institutionalising youth participation through formal governance mechanisms, including Youth Advisory Boards and structured representation within policy development, programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Participants agreed that involving young people as innovators, co-creators, and decision-makers would improve both the relevance and long-term sustainability of digital health interventions.



3.2 Building an Interoperable and People-Centred Digital Health Ecosystem

Participants emphasised that the success of Nigeria's digital health transformation depends on the development of interoperable systems capable of securely exchanging health information across healthcare providers and levels of care. Fragmented digital platforms and isolated pilot projects were identified as major barriers to continuity of care and efficient service delivery.

The roundtable reaffirmed the importance of accelerating the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Health Architecture, Health Information Exchange (HIE), Client Registry, Health Worker Registry, Health Facility Registry, and the National FHIR Profile as foundational components of an integrated digital health ecosystem. Participants stressed that individuals should be able to securely access and share their health information irrespective of where they receive care, reinforcing the principle that personal health data belongs to the individual and should remain protected through trusted governance frameworks.

3.3 Strengthening Digital Infrastructure and Workforce Capacity

Participants recognised that digital transformation cannot succeed without the foundational infrastructure required to support it. Reliable electricity, broadband connectivity, satellite infrastructure, cloud services, and Digital Public Infrastructure were identified as essential enablers for expanding equitable access to digital health services, particularly within rural and underserved communities.

Beyond infrastructure, discussions highlighted the importance of investing in human capacity. Participants called for digital health competencies to be integrated into pre-service and in-service education for healthcare professionals while strengthening digital literacy among health workers, regulators, and implementing institutions. Effective change management was also identified as critical to ensuring the successful adoption of digital technologies across the health system.



3.4 Trust, Governance and Responsible Innovation

The discussions underscored that trust is fundamental to the adoption of digital health solutions. Participants agreed that public confidence depends on robust governance frameworks that safeguard privacy, cybersecurity, confidentiality, and ethical data use. As digital technologies become increasingly embedded within healthcare delivery, strong legal and regulatory frameworks must evolve alongside innovation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) also emerged as an important area of discussion. While participants recognised AI's potential to enhance healthcare delivery and decision-making, they stressed that its deployment should be guided by responsible governance, transparency, ethical safeguards, and accountability to ensure that technological innovation serves the public interest.

3.5 Public-Private Partnerships as a Catalyst for Scale

Participants consistently recognised public-private partnerships as a critical mechanism for moving digital health initiatives beyond isolated pilot projects towards sustainable national implementation. Successful digital transformation, they noted, requires government, development partners, academia, technology companies, telecommunications providers, healthcare institutions, and innovators to work collaboratively from the earliest stages of programme design.

The discussions highlighted the importance of aligning innovation with national priorities, strengthening government ownership, establishing clear procurement and financing pathways, and defining shared indicators of success between implementing partners and public institutions. Participants further emphasised that sustainable implementation depends on integrating digital innovations into national systems rather than developing parallel structures that cannot be maintained beyond donor-funded project cycles.

3.6 From Strategy to Sustainable Implementation

A recurring conclusion throughout the roundtable was that Nigeria possesses many of the policy frameworks, institutional structures, and innovative solutions required to advance digital health. However, participants agreed that implementation remains the defining challenge. Greater emphasis must therefore be placed on operationalising existing strategies through coordinated governance, sustained investment, institutional ownership, and measurable accountability.

Rather than measuring success by the number of digital platforms or pilot initiatives launched, participants advocated for an outcome-oriented approach focused on improved health outcomes, equitable access to healthcare, stronger health system resilience, enhanced user experience, and long-term sustainability. The roundtable concluded that meaningful digital transformation will only be achieved through coordinated leadership, intentional youth engagement, interoperable systems, trusted governance, and enduring collaboration across sectors.



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4. Key Recommendations

The roundtable concluded with broad consensus on several strategic actions required to accelerate Nigeria's digital health transformation and strengthen the implementation of the National Digital Health Strategy. The following recommendations emerged from the discussions:

01

Institutionalise Youth Participation in Digital Health Governance

Participants recommended the establishment of formal mechanisms, including Youth Advisory Boards and structured youth representation, to ensure that young people are actively involved in policy development, programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Digital health systems should be designed with young people as partners, co-creators, and innovators rather than solely as end users.

02

Accelerate the Development of Interoperable Digital Health Systems

Priority should be given to completing and operationalising the National Digital Health Architecture, Health Information Exchange (HIE), Client Registry, Health Worker Registry, Health Facility Registry, and Nigeria's National FHIR Profile to enable secure, interoperable, and person-centred healthcare delivery across the country.

03

Strengthen Digital Infrastructure and Digital Public Infrastructure

Participants called for increased investment in reliable electricity, broadband connectivity, satellite infrastructure, cloud services, and Digital Public Infrastructure to improve equitable access to digital health services, particularly within underserved and rural communities.

04

Embed Trust, Privacy, and Responsible Governance into Digital Health Systems

Digital transformation should be underpinned by strong legal, regulatory, and ethical frameworks that safeguard privacy, cybersecurity, confidentiality, responsible use of Artificial Intelligence, and citizens' ownership of personal health information. Building public trust was recognised as fundamental to the adoption and sustainability of digital health solutions.

05

Invest in Workforce Capacity and Digital Literacy

Participants emphasised the need to strengthen digital competencies across the health workforce through continuous professional development, integration of digital health into pre-service education, institutional capacity building, and comprehensive change management programmes to support long-term adoption of digital technologies.

06

Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Scale

Government, development partners, private sector organisations, innovators, academia, and civil society should work collaboratively from the earliest stages of programme development to ensure that digital health initiatives align with national priorities, benefit from shared accountability, and are designed for long-term sustainability beyond donor-funded pilot projects.

5. Conclusion

The High-Level Stakeholder Roundtable reaffirmed that Nigeria stands at a pivotal moment in its digital health transformation journey. While considerable progress has been made in developing national strategies, strengthening digital infrastructure, and fostering innovation, participants agreed that the next phase of transformation must focus on implementation, interoperability, institutional ownership, and sustainable collaboration. The discussions demonstrated a shared commitment among government, the private sector, development partners, academia, healthcare providers, and youth representatives to work collectively towards building a digitally enabled health system that is inclusive, resilient, and responsive to the needs of all Nigerians.

A central message emerging from the dialogue was that digital transformation is fundamentally about people. Technology alone cannot strengthen health systems unless it is supported by trusted governance, robust digital infrastructure, skilled human resources, meaningful public-private partnerships, and policies that place citizens at the centre of healthcare delivery. Participants also reaffirmed that young people must play a more intentional role—not only as beneficiaries of digital health interventions but as innovators, co-creators, and decision-makers whose perspectives are essential to designing systems that are equitable, accessible, and fit for the future.

The roundtable further highlighted the importance of accelerating the implementation of foundational digital health initiatives, including the National Digital Health Strategy, National Digital Health Architecture, interoperable health information systems, Digital Public Infrastructure, and governance frameworks that promote trust, privacy, cybersecurity, and responsible innovation. Sustained investment in digital literacy, workforce development, connectivity, and institutional capacity was recognised as critical to ensuring that digital health solutions can be adopted, integrated, and scaled across the country.

The Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN) expresses its appreciation to the Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab), the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Nigeria Digital in Health Initiative (NDHI), distinguished speakers, panel moderators, participating organisations, and all stakeholders whose expertise and contributions enriched the discussions. The insights generated during the roundtable provide a valuable foundation for strengthening digital health policy and implementation in Nigeria and will inform ongoing collaboration to advance a more connected, people-centred, and future-ready health system.





We extend our sincere appreciation to our co-conveners—the Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab), the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMoH), and the Nigeria Digital in Health Initiative (NDHI)—for their partnership in delivering this important dialogue.

We particularly acknowledge DTH-Lab for its financial support towards the convening of the roundtable at the Africa Digital Health Summit (ADHS 2026), as well as its technical leadership in conceptualising the event, developing the discussion framework, and designing the programme.

We also thank our distinguished moderators, youth representatives, and all participants whose expertise, valuable insights, and active engagement enriched the discussions and contributed to the success of the roundtable.

Finally, we express our appreciation to our Health Guardians for their continued support, which enables the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria to advance year-round advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and policy dialogue across Nigeria's healthcare sector.

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