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GE launches a Portable Ultrasound for Developing Nations

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GE Healthcare has introduced new Vscan Access portable ultrasound system. With a simple touchscreen interface, rugged design and software tools to support clinical decision-making, Vscan Access is designed specifically for primary healthcare workers, such as midwives, general practitioners, paramedics and clinical officers, in low-resource settings to provide information to the user during pregnancy assessments. Vscan Access is currently being showcased for the first time at the 68th session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.The new system is available in certain countries in Africa and South-east Asia.

In 2010, GE made a commitment to the United Nations to develop evidence-based solutions for maternal and child health by 2015. Vscan Access is the latest in a portfolio of accessible ultrasound products to help meet that commitment.

"Based on five years of collaborative field research with stakeholders in more than 20 countries, GE Healthcare understands the challenges Ministries of Health face in developing nations, including: physician shortages in high-mortality and low-resource areas, pregnant women not seeking antenatal care (ANC), and lack of access to appropriate diagnostic devices in the primary care setting," said Mr Anders Wold, president and CEO of GE Healthcare's Ultrasound business.

He added, "Studies have shown ultrasound can help enable task-shifting to midwives for basic obstetric scanning, mobilize mothers to seek more ANC visits and improve pregnancy management through early detection and referral of pregnancy complications."

Features of the Vscan Access designed with the input of and for healthcare providers in developing nations also include a lightweight, portable, damage-and-dust-resistant design, battery-operation with flexible charging options, as well as Bluetooth wireless connectivity so data can be transferred to patients' referral facilities or remote experts easily.

Software innovations such as pregnancy education, videos for patients, a multi-lingual user interface, and a reference library

of scan images to support novice users of ultrasound, were also developed with the primary care end-user in mind.