



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

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**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

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Kigali, Republic of Rwanda, 31 August–4 September 2009

## **RESOLUTION**

### **MIGRATION OF HEALTH PERSONNEL: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH WORKERS**

The Regional Committee,

Recalling the regional strategy for the development of human resources for health (HRH) adopted by the Forty-eighth session of the Regional Committee;

Recalling also Resolution WHA57.19 of 2004 and WHA 58.17 of 2005 which noted that migration of health personnel has negative impact on health systems in developing countries and requested the Director-General, inter alia, to develop in consultation with Member States a code of practice on international recruitment of health personnel and Resolution WHA59.23 of 2006 on scaling up health workforce production;

Noting that the *World Health Report 2006*<sup>1</sup> estimated that at least 57 countries in the world are facing critical shortages of health workers and 36 of those countries are in the African Region;

Concerned about the unacceptably high mortality of mothers, children and young adults in the Region, and recognizing the additional burden that HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and noncommunicable diseases have placed on already overstretched health systems and the huge challenge being faced by countries in trying to scale up regional progress towards achieving the MDGs;

Concerned also that highly-trained and skilled health personnel from Africa continue to emigrate to certain countries within and outside the Region, exacerbating the already weak national and district health systems;

Recognizing the importance and critical role of human resources in health systems strengthening and in achieving health development goals agreed at national and regional levels;

Recognizing also the important role of the African Union in coordinating a political response to the health workforce crisis;

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<sup>1</sup> *World Health Report 2006. Working together for health.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.

Mindful of the work being done in the Region by regional economic communities, civil society organizations and international partners on human resources for health in general and on migration of skilled health personnel in particular;

Noting the significant efforts and investment made by countries of the African Region in the training and development of human resources and efforts to retain health workers in their countries of origin;

Acknowledging the importance of the draft WHO Code of practice for international recruitment and its voluntary nature to guide the recruitment of international health personnel;

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to continue to develop and implement policies and strategies that increase retention of their health workers including strengthening the planning and management of human resources for health, review of salaries and incentives schemes, and improvement of working conditions, among others;
- (b) to accelerate the development of costed national HRH strategies, linked to national health sector strategic plans;
- (c) to foster bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed to better manage migration and reduce the negative effects and develop mechanisms for facilitating fair compensation of source countries by destination countries;
- (d) to strengthen training institutions to scale up training of health workers through innovative curricula to address current health care needs at district and local level;
- (e) to develop national HRH observatories to generate information and evidence for use in human resource policy development, planning and management;
- (f) to foster inter-ministerial collaboration to address the health workforce crisis, and look beyond the public sector in seeking to strengthen health workforce capacity and stewardship;

2. CALLS UPON the African Union, Global Health Workforce Alliance, African Platform for HRH and international health partners including nongovernmental organizations, foundations and research institutions:

- (a) to cooperate directly with countries facing shortage of health workers in order to mitigate the adverse effects of emigration and support strategies to remedy the situation, and to ensure that funds provided for disease-specific interventions are used to strengthen health systems capacity, including health workforce development;
- (b) to support countries in the development, implementation and monitoring of comprehensive HRH policies and strategies;
- (c) to support building of South-South and North-South cooperation for health workforce development and retention;
- (d) to support the establishment of a special training fund to increase training in the source countries in order to address the negative effects of migration;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to submit to the Director-General the African Region's contribution towards the finalization of the Code;
- (b) to continue raising awareness of the human resources for health crisis and support Member States in increasing their efforts to strengthen health systems including human resources for health;
- (c) to continue to support countries in the development of comprehensive HRH policies and costed strategic plans;
- (d) to encourage research to monitor the trends and impacts of migration on health systems and generate evidence for HRH decision-making;
- (e) to work closely with the relevant United Nations agencies, African Union and regional economic communities on issues concerning migration of health personnel;
- (f) to report on progress in the finalization of the Code at the global level, taking into account the concerns of the African Region, at the Sixtieth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa.

*Thirteenth meeting, 3 September 2009*