



15 July 2003

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SPECIAL SESSION 2: HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH:
REPORT ON JOINT AFRO/IOM SURVEY ON MIGRATION**

1. JUSTIFICATION

Adequate human resource availability is crucial to improving the performance of health systems. However, there is a growing problem of mass exodus of health professionals from developing countries to developed countries, a situation which continues to cause concern in most developing countries. The situation in the African Region is alarming and has already reached critical dimensions in many countries. Although the gravity of the problem varies between countries in the region, the situation in some countries is very serious and requires urgent action by governments, partners and WHO.

Development of human resources for health was on the agenda of the fifty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa. In discussing that agenda item, ministers noted with concern the gravity and complexity of the exodus of human resources for health and the need to address issues concerning human resources for health in general and the scale of the brain drain in particular as well as their negative impact on health services in the Region. There was also concern that in spite of the very many discussions that had already taken place on the subject of brain drain, very few concrete achievements had been made. It is particularly important to note that Heads of State of the African Union decided in July 2002 to declare the year 2004 as “Year for Development of Human Resources with special focus on health workers” and to hold a special Summit in that same year.

For its part, the fifty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa requested WHO and IOM to work together on the issue of migration in order to gather further information regarding health care personnel currently working outside their countries of origin. To that end, a survey was conducted in Africa by WHO and abroad by IOM to collect data on migrants in the diaspora and determine the kind of incentives that can motivate them to return home. Furthermore, WHO conducted a study on “Migration of Skilled Health Personnel” in six African countries, namely Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The study aimed to provide detailed information about migration patterns of four categories of trained health personnel (doctors, nurses and midwives, dentists and pharmacists), the magnitude and trends of migration, reasons for migration and the effect of migration on the delivery of health services.

2. OBJECTIVE

This special session aims to review the preliminary reports on migration and identify feasible interventions to arrest and possibly reverse the brain drain.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness of the magnitude of brain drain.
- Consensus on appropriate action to be taken in the short, medium and long-term to arrest and possibly reverse the brain drain.
- Consensus on the role of countries, partners, multinational agencies, IOM and WHO in the implementation of the actions agreed upon.

4. PARTICIPANTS

Members States: Ministers of health or their representatives

International Organization for Migration: IOM Secretariat

WHO: WHO Secretariat

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE SESSION

Chairman : -Minister of Health, Senegal

Alternate Chairman : -Minister of Health, Burkina Faso

Date : -3 September, 2003

Time : -4.30 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Place : -Johannesburg

Venue : -To be announced at the Regional Committee meeting

6. PROPOSED PROGRAMME

- Introductory remarks** : - Dr E.M. Samba, WHO Regional Director for Africa – 5 minutes
- Presentations** : - Dr R. Chatora, Director, Division of Health Systems and Services Development, WHO/AFRO – 7 minutes
- Dr Ndioro Ndiaye, International Organization for Migration – 8 minutes
- Discussion** : - 35 minutes
- Conclusion** : - 5 minutes