

Statement to the 68th World Health Assembly on agenda item 17.2.

WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the World Health Assembly on behalf of Medicus Mundi International, the People's Health Movement, the European "Health Workers for All" coalition and the Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative:

Text

We welcome the report of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on the Code review. The report is very clear about the relevance of the Code as a key instrument for health workforce development and health systems sustainability.

We support the EAG proposal to have an in-depth review of the Code in 2018-19 and to align the review with the third round of national reporting. We expect WHO and MS to implement Art. 9.5 stating that the Code "should be considered a dynamic text that should be brought up to date as required." We expect MS to reconsider at that moment not only emerging trends and dynamic global policy drivers, but also current shortfalls of the Code, mainly the lack of provisions on compensation and the quality of the Code as a legally non-binding instrument.

As the EAG correctly states, because of implementation and governance gaps, the Code is not yet an effective instrument for achieving the change that is desperately needed for, e.g.:

- Protection of and equal labor rights for migrating health workers
- Protection of the human right to access health services in countries with critical health workforce shortage
- Better instruments for national, regional and global health workforce planning

Several EAG conclusions and recommendations reflect our statement at the 66th WHA, being:

- Weak uptake and ownership of the Code by too many member states
- Weak leadership by WHO due to limited resources
- The critical issue of information sharing, transparency and accountability
- The critical issue of cooperating with all stakeholders in global and national policy dialogues

We urge MS, the owners of the Code, to fulfill their commitments made when adopting it:

- Implement the Code as it is today!
- Report on its implementation before 31 July!
- Strengthen the capacities of WHO to better govern and manage Code implementation!

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