

**Statement to the 126th session of the Executive Board of WHO, on International recruitment of health personnel: draft global code of practice (agenda item 4.5)**

**by Medicus Mundi International, delivered by Anke Tijtsma, Wemos  
on Wednesday 20 January 2010**

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Chair, Thank you for giving me the opportunity to briefly address the distinguished members of the Executive Board on behalf of Medicus Mundi International.

We welcome the improvements made in this revised version of the Code. The amendments made have strengthened this vital document. We especially welcome the emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of **destination countries** in tackling the HRH crisis.

However, Medicus Mundi International wishes to raise several issues to further strengthen the ability of State and non-State actors to adhere to the Code and enhance its overall impact.

First, the Code correctly refers to the right and responsibility of all States to progressively achieve full realization of the Right to Health, but it does not make explicitly that the right to health entails both the obligation of countries to strengthening their own health systems and **the obligation of international cooperation and assistance**. We encourage explicit incorporation of this guiding principle in Article 3 of the code.

Second, in article 3 on Guiding Principles, it would be important that **more coherent domestic and international policies be promoted** in order to avoid jeopardising the workforce in other Member States.

Third, we feel **monitoring of the Code** will be essential. **All actors** dealing with the recruitment of health personnel have a responsibility in making the monitoring work. We would also like to reiterate the importance of **participation of non-State actors** in the implementation and monitoring process.

Fourth, with regard to the issue of self-sufficiency of countries, we strongly recommend that the Code incorporate the concept of **shared responsibility**. We suggest that this concept be added in the article on Mutuality of Benefits, and urge countries that are reliant on foreign health workers to share in the responsibility of supporting HRH in the countries from which they recruit.

In addition, we feel that the preamble should recognise that domestic workforce development, recruitment policies and incentives on the part of destination/developed countries often **increase** the demand for and further encourage the international movement of health workers. Addressing this point in the **preamble** is important to put in context many of the measures later articulated throughout the document.

Fifth, we welcome the effort to address and regulate international migration of health workers by endorsing a strong Code that can guide Member States, as well as non-State actors, towards **ethical** international recruitment and eventually generate a globally balanced health workforce. Therefore, we believe it important to modify the formal title of the Code and to include the word **'ethical'** in its title.

We acknowledge that it may be hard to reach consensus on the text of the Code. We, however, **urge the Executive Board to submit the Code to the 63rd World Health Assembly**, and to ensure that it will benefit the nations and their people and help to build stronger health systems worldwide.

Thank you.