



## World Health Professions Alliance WHPA

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### Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly

#### Agenda item 17.2: WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

Honourable Members of the World Health Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the World Confederation for Physical Therapy, the World Dental Federation and the World Medical Association, which together form the World Health Professions Alliance WHPA and represents collective views of more than 26 million healthcare professionals globally.

We appreciate that the current Code offers a balanced approach between freedom of movement for healthcare workers and the importance of ensuring a sufficient and competent workforce to meet local health needs.

Lack of adequate training and poor workforce planning drives shortages of health professionals, often aggravated by professional being maldistributed internally. The WHPA is deeply concerned as this phenomena drives unethical international recruitment practices, especially from LMICs. According to the International Labor Organization, more than half of the global rural population currently lacks basic access to health care due to “decades of underinvestment.”<sup>1</sup>

We therefore ask WHO and its member states to:

- Integrate internal maldistribution measures into periodic reporting by member states;
- Address economic and regulatory factors resulting in health professional attrition.

We are concerned about emerging recruiting practices and developments, including:

- Bilateral agreements lacking transparent verification of professional qualifications resulting in denial of basic labor protections and benefits for health professionals
- Special laws limiting health care workers mobility, which may impede sustainable long term health care solutions for rural areas;
- Multilateral trade agreements affecting the health workforce in an unbalanced way, leading to an increased migration of health professionals from poor to rich countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Global evidence on inequities in rural health protection: New data on rural deficits in health coverage for 174 countries

[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_362525/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_362525/lang--en/index.htm)

We ask WHO and member states to continue to work toward effective health workforce planning to address these emerging trends. We further applaud the general debate's topic "building resilient healthcare systems" - and emphasize the importance of adequate training, staffing and financing in realizing these goals.