

Statement by Medicus Mundi International - Network Health for All and its member Wemos to the 68th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe on session 5 (e) Report on the WHO high-level meeting, Health Systems Respond to NCDs: Experience in the European Region (Sitges, Spain, 16–18 April 2018) and 5 (j) Report on the WHO high-level meeting, Health Systems for Prosperity and Solidarity: Leaving No One Behind (Tallinn, Estonia, 13–14 June 2018) and draft resolution EUR/RC68/Conf.Doc./8 ‘Reaffirming commitment to health systems strengthening for universal health coverage, better outcomes and reduced health inequalities’

Medicus Mundi International - Network Health for All and its member Wemos would like to bring two pertinent issues to your attention regarding ‘Reaffirming commitment to health systems strengthening for universal health coverage, better outcomes and reduced health inequalities’.

One is that the economic recovery of some countries in the European Region will lead to a growing number of vacancies for health and social care workers in those countries. As many of their domestic health and care workers have left the health sector definitively during the preceding times of austerity, it proves difficult for some countries to fulfill these vacancies. This situation may create a strong pull effect on health and social care workers in other parts of the European Region, as well as from low and middle income countries elsewhere, which may result in increased health worker mobility and weakened health systems in the countries of origin. Therefore, **concerted investments in a strong health workforce in all countries of the European Region**, on the basis of solid data, and from a spirit of solidarity and mutual responsibility, remain a high priority. We ask for your continued efforts to achieve this.

Secondly, we want to remind Member States of the currently on-going **third round of reporting on the WHO Code of Practice of the International Recruitment of Health Personnel**. Both the National Reports that are expected from Member States’ Governments, and the Independent Stakeholders Reports from civil society, form an important source of information for the World Health Organization Secretariat and the World Health Assembly in May 2019. We therefore strongly urge Member States as well as civil society to provide the WHO with relevant data and case studies on international recruitment of health workers, health worker mobility and their consequences on health systems in the European Region. Without these country-based data and analyses, efforts to improve the implementation of the WHO Code and to strengthen the health workforce are aimless and ineffective.

Basel and Amsterdam, September 2018