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Resolution

Health workforce policies in the WHO European Region

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions WHA57.19 and WHA58.17 on the international migration of health personnel: a challenge for health systems in developing countries, and resolutions WHA59.23 on the rapid scaling up of health workforce production, and WHA59.27 on the strengthening of nursing and midwifery;

Recalling also resolutions EUR/RC50/R5 and EUR/RC55/R8 on cooperation with countries and strengthening European health systems as a continuation of the WHO Regional Office for Europe's Country Strategy "Matching services to new needs", and EUR/RC57/R1 and its accompanying background document EUR/RC57/9 on Health workforce policies in the European Region;

Recalling the recommendation made by the WHO Executive Board at its 124th session concerning wider global consultations with the Member States on the World Health Organization code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel and the subsequent request by the Director-General that the regional committee sessions be used to enhance regional consultations with the Member States, with a view to providing feedback to the Executive Board at its 126th session and a recommendation on the adoption of the WHO code of practice by the Sixty-third World Health Assembly in 2010;

Taking stock of the recent efforts made at both global and regional levels to increase awareness of the negative consequences of the increasing migration of health workers, with a view to the adoption of a code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel;¹

Acknowledging once again that educated and well-trained health workers save lives, and that the functioning of health systems depends on the availability, efforts and skill mix of the workforce and relies on their knowledge, skills and motivation;

Reasserting the undeniable importance of adequate numbers, distribution and skills mix of human resources in strengthening health systems and ensuring equitable access to health care, regardless of ability to pay or location, as affirmed in the Tallinn Charter on Health Systems, Health and Wealth;

Calling attention once again, with great concern, to the geographical and skill-mix imbalances in the health workforce that result from the increasing migration of health workers within, into and from the Region, and their consequences on health systems and access to health care in the countries of origin;

Recognizing that, while the international migration of health workers can bring mutual benefits to both source and destination countries, migration from those countries that are already experiencing a crisis in their health workforce is further weakening already fragile health systems and represents a serious impediment to achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals;

¹ Including, but not limited to, in chronological order: (i) *The world health report 2006* on human resources for health; (ii) the Kampala Declaration made at the end of the Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, (Kampala, Uganda, 2–7 March 2008); (iii) the WHO Ministerial Conference on Health Systems: “Health Systems, Health and Wealth” (Tallinn, 25–27 June 2008), and the pursuant Tallinn Charter, adopted by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its fifty-eighth session, (Tbilisi, Georgia, 15–18 September 2008); (iv) the reference to the need to train a sufficient number of health workers in the G8 communiqué issued in July 2008; (v) the progress report and draft code of practice submitted to the WHO Executive Board at its 124th session in January 2009 (EB124/13); and (vi) the issue paper entitled *International recruitment of health personnel: a draft global code of practice*, prepared by the WHO Secretariat and presented as a technical brief at the Sixty-second World Health Assembly, on 20 May 2009.

Having considered document EUR/RC59/9 on health workforce policies in the WHO European Region;

1. WELCOMES the report;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (a) to increase their efforts to develop and implement sustainable health workforce policies, strategies and plans as a critical component of health systems strengthening, particularly in view of the changing demographics and health care needs in the Region, and the need to ensure equitable access to health care services while minimizing the need to rely on the immigration of health personnel from other countries;
 - (b) to increase their efforts to monitor the trends in, and patterns of, health workforce migration and to assess its impact in order to identify and initiate effective migration-related policy options, including the enactment of a new, and/or harmonization of their existing, code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel, and establishing agreements with other countries to address the movement of health workers;
 - (c) to advocate the adoption of a global code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel in line with the European values of solidarity, equity and participation, both within the WHO European Region and globally;
 - (d) to advocate, in line with the principles of transparency, ethics, fairness and mutuality of benefits, that the code should include protecting the right to leave his or her own country, and balance the relation between the individual rights of the migrant workers and the right to health of the populations of the source countries, helping, to mitigate the effects of migration on the health systems of source countries; and
 - (e) to promote positive development effects of migration within the health care sector;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to continue to promote the harmonization of health workforce data and the use of standard indicators and tools to improve quality and comparability for assessing performance in human resources for health;
- (b) to continue to develop the core set of indicators for assessing performance in health workforce development in Member States, and to monitor and evaluate the current patterns and trends in migration of health workers, and the implementation and impact of policy interventions at national and WHO European regional levels through the analysis of country reports and the publication of annual regional syntheses of those reports;
- (c) to complete the consultation process with Member States, civil society organizations, professional associations and other regional and international entities, and the compilation and review of the various national and regional codes of practice in the WHO European Region and of the literature and data on migration of health workforce, as an input to the global code of practice for the international recruitment of health workers; and
- (d) to report back to the Regional Committee at its sixty-second session in 2012 on the progress made.