

World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)



Constituency statement to the WHO Executive Board 156 (Feb 2025)

Agenda Item 12: Health and care workforce

Before I start reading the constituency statement, these are the non-state actors co-signing the statement:

- *FDI World Dental Federation (FDI)*
- *FIP International Pharmaceutical Federation*
- *ICN International Council of Nurses*
- *WMA World Medical Association*
- *World Confederation of Physical Therapy (World Physiotherapy)*
- *International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care*

Five of the organisations supporting this statement - FDI, FIP, ICN, WMA and World Physiotherapy - are part of the World Health Professions Alliance, representing over 41 million health professionals globally, and have a Memorandum of Understanding with WHO.

Concerning ethical recruitment and the Global Code of Practice, we are concerned by the continuing unsustainable practice of high-income countries depleting the health workforce in low-income countries often facing severe shortages themselves. Such recruitment threatens access to essential health services in under-resourced regions and undermines fragile in-country capacity building initiatives as well as shared global commitments to health equity and universal health coverage. In 2023, Dr. Tedros committed to convening a meeting of those high-income countries driving the majority of international health workforce recruitment. We support this approach to achieving better compliance with the Code. We are, however, concerned that this meeting has not yet taken place and believe it should now be a priority.

On the Global Strategy for Human Resources for Health, we are concerned about the slowing rate of implementation. The projected shortage of health workers in 2030 has increased, reflecting a continuing shortfall in investment, a threat to the quality of care, and a massive burden on health professionals. Working conditions are deteriorating as governments cut health budgets, or privatize services which in addition means a loss of labour and pension rights. There is also increased, and more severe, violence against health professionals and they are suffering moral distress as a result of underfunded health services. We urge member states to prioritize quality of care and the right to safe and decent working conditions.

Finally, we are also concerned that WHO conflates health professionals and health

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service providers, such as care workers and community health workers (CHWs). Differentiating between health professionals, who are licensed/regulated and highly educated, and on the other hand CHWs, who have less regulation, training and accountability, has significant and direct impacts on the safety and quality of care. WHPA calls on WHO and its member states to consistently highlight this difference.