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# MIGRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

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The migration of health care workers is not a new phenomenon, but the issue has become of utmost importance in recent years due to the global shortage of health care workers. As populations age in industrialized countries, there has been a sharp rise in demand for health care workers. This demand acts as a pull factor in the migration of health care workers from developing countries with already struggling health care systems and insufficient human resources.

In recognition of the need for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the migration of health care workers, the International Organization for Migration organized a seminar in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), bringing together stakeholders working in the migration, health and labour sectors.

## Objective

*The overall objective of this seminar was to create a forum where stakeholders discussed the issues relating to effective management of the mobility of health care workers and to move the agenda from awareness to action.*

## Results

*Stakeholders from the migration, health and labour sector, from governments, the private sector and civil society from 63 countries, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs attended the seminar. Perspectives of sending and receiving countries, migrant health care workers, professional organizations, business and civil society, workers and employers organizations were presented and discussed.*

*The following issues were highlighted for the management of health care worker migration:*

- *Investment in education of health care workers*
- *Attract more people to join health workforces*
- *Improve working conditions*
- *Review retirement policies*
- *Promote retention of health workforces*
- *Channel remittances to strengthen health systems*
- *Promote knowledge and skill transfers from diasporas*
- *Facilitate virtual and actual return migration*
- *Guest worker schemes*
- *Cost sharing mechanisms*

## Conclusion and IOM action points to carry the agenda forward

In conclusion, there is widespread agreement that the cooperation of all stakeholders is needed to ensure that migration factors are addressed coherently to have a positive impact on the management of the movement of health care workers.

IOM has identified the following action points for it to pursue to move the agenda forward:

- IOM, WHO and ILO to collaborate to provide technical assistance to governments to improve national health information systems, including data collection and analysis and the use of a sound evidence base to develop strategies to manage the migration of health care workers.
- IOM, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, to establish an observatory to track/monitor the global migration of health care workers.
- International Organizations to establish a global alliance for the management of human resources for health to bring together relevant stakeholders for dialogue, to share experiences and to develop action plans and strategies.
- IOM to create an on-line platform to facilitate information exchange on best practices, innovative policies and programmes for the management of health care worker migration.
- IOM to establish and maintain a database of current health workforce resources in diasporas.
- IOM, development agencies, the World Bank and others in collaboration with the private business sector to establish an International public-private financing mechanism for human resource development for health.

It is IOM's sincere hope that other stakeholders will undertake a similar reflection on what they can do to move the agenda forward from awareness to action.

*IOM is an intergovernmental organization committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM has 118 Member States and over 290 offices throughout the world.*