



72nd World Health Assembly
12.3 Human Resources for Health

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, representing 9 million physicians around the world.

WMA supports WHO's efforts to develop national health workforce accounts and monitor the migration of health professionals (HP).

In many countries, including the wealthiest ones, we note a shortage of physicians. A major reason for this gap is a failure to educate enough physicians to meet the health needs of the country's population. As a response for this shortage, many countries encourage international recruitment. We emphasize the critical need to regulate those recruitments and call on Member states to implement the international code for recruitment of HP.

The WMA acknowledges that temporary stays of physicians in other countries facilitate exchange of medical knowledge, skills and attitudes for both the sending and receiving countries. The exchange of HP is beneficial for the development of medicine and healthcare systems and in general deserves the support of governments.

Physicians do have valid reasons for migrating, for example, to seek better career opportunities and to escape poor working and living conditions, which may include the pursuit of more political and personal freedoms and other benefits.

We therefore urge member states to refrain from coercive measures restricting the mobility of HP - which have proven to be an unsustainable method for recruitment - and to respect their right to free mobility. We believe that various strategies, such as socially accountable education and attractive conditions to work in underserved areas, constitute more sustainable interventions on the long run.

Investing in the improvement of health care systems is a solid retention strategy for HP. Universal health coverage can only be achievable with a multi-disciplinary health care team, with necessary support by community health workers. This will deliver high quality care to patients and their families.

Thank you,