



REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

25 July 2016

Sixty-third Session  
Cairo, Egypt, 3-6 October 2016

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT

**Objectives of the event**

The objectives are to:

- brief participants on key health workforce challenges;
- present and discuss the draft regional strategic framework to address health workforce challenges aligned with the *Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030*

**Background**

The Eastern Mediterranean Region is facing major health workforce challenges. Overall production and availability of health workers is suboptimal and imbalanced. Inequitable geographic distribution is faced in several Member States, and concerns abound in relation to quality, relevance and performance of health workers. Reliable and updated health workforce information is a serious gap in the Region which requires specific attention.

Sustainable Development Goals underpin the health workforce with a target (3c) to “Substantially increase health financing, and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, ...”. The global strategy, adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2016, is a response to this vision and draws attention to the need for increasing investment to build health workforce responding to 21st century priorities and matching effectively the supply and skills of health workers to population needs today and in the future.

Health workforce issues, by nature require strategic positioning and systematic solutions. Only long-term actions, backed up by political commitment and adequate investment, will lead to the improvements required to attain sustainable results in developing the health workforce. Therefore, comprehensive strategic planning is a prerequisite and a fundamental step in addressing health workforce challenges.

Building on the global strategy on human resources for health, as well as earlier regional commitments (*Regional framework for action on medical education and Framework for action to strengthen nursing and midwifery, 2016–2025*), the strategic framework for health workforce development in the Region has been developed in response to health workforce challenges. It is expected that the strategic framework will guide Member States in strengthening the health workforce across the Region.

## **The strategic framework**

The draft regional strategic framework aims to ensure access for all people in the Region to an adequate, competent, well balanced, motivated and responsive health workforce functioning within robust health systems geared towards universal health coverage.

The draft regional strategic framework emphasizes the development and implementation of evidence-informed health workforce policies and strategic plans to provide a strategic vision in addressing health workforce challenges. Health workforce policies and strategic plans need to be in line with the overall health strategy and broader development strategies to strengthen health systems. Such strategies should cover all cadres of health workers taking into account the dynamics of the labour market, population needs, economic growth, and demographic and epidemiological changes of a country.

The development and especially implementation of health workforce policies and strategic plans need to be supported by some enabling strategies: capacities for governance and regulation are critical for implementation. Similarly, adequate investment and resources should be available to realize the plans. Information and evidence is critical for both effective and realistic planning and monitoring progress in addressing health workforce challenges.

The draft strategic framework identifies four policy directions in line with the *Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030*.

1. Develop and implement comprehensive national health workforce policies and strategic plans to optimize health workforce availability, quality and performance, based on an understanding of labour market dynamics.
2. Strengthen capacities for health workforce governance and regulation.
3. Mobilize and align investment in the health workforce to ensure implementation of strategic plans to meet current and future health workforce needs, quantitatively and qualitatively.
4. Strengthen the health workforce information base for designing, implementing and monitoring health workforce strategies.

## **Expected outcomes of the meeting**

The session is expected to provide suggestions to further enhance the draft regional strategic framework for health workforce development and on how to take the health workforce agenda forward in the Region.