

قرار

Resolution

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

**EM/RC70/R.4
October 2023**

**Seventieth session
Agenda item 3(c)**

A call for action to enhance and scale up the health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The Regional Committee,

Having reviewed the technical paper on health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 lessons to action;¹

Acknowledging Regional Committee resolution EM/RC69/R.2 (2022) on building resilient health systems to advance universal health coverage and ensure health security in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, in which investing in health workforce was identified as one of seven regional priorities;

Recalling Regional Committee resolutions EM/RC64/R.1 (2017) endorsing the framework for action on health workforce development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to accelerate progress in addressing health workforce challenges towards the 2030 Agenda, and EM/RC66/R.3 (2019) on strengthening the nursing workforce to advance universal health coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;

Recalling also the Arab Region Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Framework 2022–2030, which was developed jointly by the League of Arab States, the United Nations Population Fund and WHO, and adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States in 2022;

Recalling that in 2015 all Member States of the Region committed, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to achieving universal health coverage and to substantially increasing health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, and also recalling that in 2018 all Member States of the Region signed the UHC2030 Global Compact and endorsed the Salalah Declaration on Universal Health Coverage;

Recalling World Health Assembly resolution WHA69.19 (2016) on the global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030, resolution WHA70.6 (2017) on human resources for health and implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations' High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, resolution WHA72.3 (2019) on community health workers delivering primary health care: opportunities and challenges, decision WHA72(19) (2019) on 2020: International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, decision WHA73(30) (2020) on human resources for health and the International Year of Health and Care Workers 2021, document WHA73/9 (2020) on the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel: Report of the

¹ EM/RC70/5.

WHO Expert Advisory Group on the Relevance and Effectiveness of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, resolution WHA74.14 (2021) on protecting, safeguarding and investing in the health and care workforce, and resolution WHA74.15 (2021) on strengthening nursing and midwifery: investments in education, jobs, leadership and service delivery;

Noting that many health systems in the Region are facing health workforce challenges related to shortages of health workers, skills imbalances, shortages of certain specialties and subspecialties, inadequate production capacities and increasing international mobility of health workers;

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted health workforce shortages as a major challenge in pandemic response and maintaining essential health services;

Noting that the countries in the Region are prone to emergencies and that almost half the countries are experiencing protracted crises;

Concerned about the extensive migration of health workforce from many countries of the Region to higher-income countries;

Aware that health is a key economic and employment sector, with a global economic contribution of over US\$ 9 trillion in 2020, and that investments in health systems, including in health workforce, stimulate economic growth, create jobs and promote social protection, cohesion and health security;

Concerned that progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets related to universal health coverage, including target 3.c on health workforce, is not happening at the desired pace, and that implementation of the framework for action on health workforce development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2017–2030) is at the halfway mark;

Acknowledging the need for immediate and accelerated action to invest in and empower health workforce;

1. **ENDORSES the call for action:** priority areas and actions to enhance and scale up a fit-for-purpose health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
2. **CALLS FOR ACTION and URGES Member States to:**
 - 2.1 Accelerate the framework for action for health workforce development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2017–2030), by taking action to:
 - 2.1.1 Undertake health labour market analysis to inform and guide the development of health workforce strategic plans and focus policy interventions.
 - 2.1.2 Conduct evidence-based multisectoral, multi-stakeholder policy dialogues on health workforce policies and strategies.
 - 2.1.3 Develop and implement comprehensive health workforce strategic plans addressing current health workforce needs and providing a strategic vision of the future health workforce.
 - 2.1.4 Develop and implement strategies to improve the recruitment, deployment, retention, career development, motivation and performance of health workers.
 - 2.1.5 Invest in strengthening health workforce information systems and analysis, using National Health Workforce Accounts and health workforce observatories.
 - 2.1.6 Strengthen capacities for health workforce governance and regulation.

- 2.1.7 Establish/strengthen mechanisms and processes for the regulation of health workforce practice and education to ensure a quality response to population needs, public protection and patient safety.
 - 2.1.8 Empower health workforce departments within ministries of health with adequate mandate, human and financial resources, and an enabling environment, and develop leadership and technical capacities through relevant training programmes.
 - 2.1.9 Take into account the significant and increasing participation of women in the health labour market and ensure appropriate opportunities for them when developing health workforce policies, strategies and interventions.
- 2.2 Increase and sustain investment in the production and employment of health workers, ensuring better alignment with the needs of health systems, by taking action to:
- 2.2.1 Mobilize more domestic resources for the health workforce, including diversifying funding sources.
 - 2.2.2 Prioritize health workforce in the allocation of domestic and external resources, including significant allocation from global health initiatives where relevant.
 - 2.2.3 Align investments with the needs of health systems, in scaling up health professional education at all levels together and in job creation and employment.
 - 2.2.4 Orient investments to address skills gaps giving special attention to scaling up education and employment of nurses and midwives.
- 2.3 Prioritize the strengthening of the health workforce at primary care level to ensure the competent delivery of essential public health functions and emergency response, and to fill gaps exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, by taking action to:
- 2.3.1 Build or strengthen multidisciplinary primary care teams in line with the model of care in the country.
 - 2.3.2 Ensure that health workforce requirements are met for the delivery of essential public health functions.
 - 2.3.3 Build surge capacities for emergency response.
 - 2.3.4 Scale up and professionalize the health workforce, with special focus on the public health workforce, through competency frameworks and practice-based models of education and training.
- 2.4 Reorient and transform health professional education to address the competency needs of current and future health workers, by taking action to:
- 2.4.1 Reorient health professional education towards socially accountable, competency-based models, ensuring synergies between education and health services, with a life-long learning approach.
 - 2.4.2 Introduce interprofessional education and collaborative practice to prepare health professionals to be part of a multidisciplinary team.
 - 2.4.3 Prioritize the scaling-up of production of nurses, midwives and primary care cadres to address service gaps and skill-mix imbalances.
 - 2.4.4 Equip the health workforce with skills in line with the requirements of digital transformation and adapt health professional education accordingly.

- 2.5 Improve the retention of health workers, giving special attention to the increasing international mobility of health professionals within and outside the Region, by taking action to:
 - 2.5.1 Develop and adopt strategies for the retention of health workers, taking into account regulatory, educational, financial, personal and professional support interventions, using WHO guidelines on retention strategies.
 - 2.5.2 Provide support for fair and equitable compensation, social protection and employment security.
 - 2.5.3 Manage international migration of health workers through bilateral and multilateral agreements.
 - 2.5.4 Harness the diaspora for engagement in strengthening national health systems.
 - 2.5.5 Strengthen international collaboration among countries and stakeholders on health workforce data and information exchange, research and policy dialogue.
- 2.6 Protect and safeguard the health and well-being of the health workforce, by taking action to:
 - 2.6.1 Adopt measures to protect health workers from all occupational hazards and support their mental and psychosocial well-being.
 - 2.6.2 Adopt measures to prevent violence and harassment against health workers and ensure their safety and security, including through cooperation with relevant and competent bodies.
 - 2.6.3 Ensure healthy and decent work conditions and safe, healthy, supportive work environments, including safe staffing levels, decent working hours and adequate remuneration to enable health workers to deliver respectful and quality care to all.
- 2.7 Promote regional solidarity in support of national strategies, by taking action to:
 - 2.7.1 Establish mechanisms to facilitate regional collaboration, especially to support the countries of the Region on the WHO health workforce support and safeguards list.
 - 2.7.2 Facilitate technical cooperation among countries and with other WHO regions, ensuring that they benefit from each other's strengths.
 - 2.7.3 Harmonize partnership and development assistance to health workforce strengthening in line with regional and national priorities.

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:

- 3.1 Provide technical support to Member States to adapt and implement priority actions, according to national context;
- 3.2 Establish a multisectoral advisory committee to guide and advise on the implementation of the call for action;
- 3.3 Build regional and national expertise in health labour market analysis and health workforce governance and planning;
- 3.4 Facilitate a mechanism to ensure regional collaboration to strengthen health workforce across the Region, fostering regional solidarity;
- 3.5 Facilitate resource mobilization in support of national efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the call for action;
- 3.6 Report on progress in implementing this resolution to the 73rd and 76th sessions of the Regional Committee.