

Migration of healthcare workers

Issue context

The question of how best to resolve the conflicting interests surrounding the migration of health care workers is long standing. Recent debates and resolutions, such as the SADEC Health Ministers conference in January and the World Health Assembly in May 2002, highlight the urgency of establishing an equitable, effective solution. The need to improve the management of human resources in health care services is stressed in the Draft Plan of Implementation for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. This proposal offers the opportunity to use the WSSD as a focal point for establishing a way forward in this critical area.

Stakeholder Forum has spoken to a number of stakeholders involved, including WHO, IOM, WMA, ILO, ICFTU, ICN, Rockefeller Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat and a number of governments. The multiple approaches being undertaken to addressing the issue and establish solutions include the WMA's taskforce (for physicians) and the Commonwealth Secretariat (for member countries). It is less clear whether the solutions being developed form a coherent overall approach, acceptable to all stakeholders.

Process context

Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future is an international, multi-stakeholder organisation – a network and forum committed to the promotion of global sustainable development (www.stakeholderforum.org). For the last two years, Stakeholder Forum has been working towards the Earth Summit 2002 in Johannesburg. The main event around the summit that it is organising is the Implementation Conference.

The Implementation Conference (see www.earthsummit2002.org/ic) is a key element in a broader process: *Stakeholder Action for Our Common Future*. Within specific areas of Health, Energy, Food Security and Freshwater, stakeholders will agree to engage in collaborative action that will contribute towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Agreements.

Proposal re. Migration of Health Care Workers

Relevant stakeholder organisations affected by and concerned with the migration of health workers, including, in particular, those that are developing solutions to the problems caused, are invited to participate in a dedicated work programme. This will initially involve participation in a three day, professionally facilitated workshop in Johannesburg (August 24-26) and the development of and preparation for that workshop. Ongoing work will be as determined by the stakeholders attending this workshop.

The **purpose** is to find a global solution to the ethical and practical problems caused by the migration of health workers, and initially to agree a process by which such a solution could be reached. Potential outcomes include:

- Agreement of the need for and shared understanding of the role of a global, broadly represented network (central coordination group), with commitments from working group members to work together to address this issue over time;
- OR Agreement of the need for a multi-stakeholder group to be established to develop a global solution to the issue, acceptable to each stakeholder group
- identification of which organisation(s) should commission such a group and
- proposals as to how to select the different members of the group, including in particular how to select government representatives; and
- a clear, agreed plan of how to proceed.